

Good morning Horizons I'm Lisa Butler. I had to bring my stool in my coffee. I'm a notorious hand talker, so at some point this Mike is going to go flying because I got to use my hands. Good morning. I am here to share the message with you. You can see on the on the back screen there, we want to connect with you.

If you're new, please, Texas. If you just want to say, hey, what's up, Texas, you want to say, just text hello to that number on the screen. If you want to complain about what I'm going to say, call Pastor Mandy tomorrow morning. I'm talking today about justice. And I suspect I just made some of you uncomfortable. Good. I'm not worried about that too much.

But we've been talking starting last week and continuing this week about the goals that the steering team, which I'm part of set for Horizons for this coming year. One of our goals was to join and connect a commit to justice in action. Justice in action. I want to talk more about that in a little bit, but it is a consortium of about 20 churches here in Lancaster County.

We are working together to identify where there are needs in our community and how we collectively can affect change to meet those needs. Joining in, partnering with one another and joining in, partnering with our community. And that's the work of justice that I want to talk about today. I know that sometimes when we're talking about justice, we think criminal justice.

That's not what I'm talking about. So that's just new that I can give you a lecture about that later. I teach about that at the university, but that's not what I'm talking about today. Um, really, what I'm talking about is God's call throughout Scripture for His people to act justly, to do his work, to build a just and peaceful kingdom.

The definition from the Jewish tradition translates the Hebrew term Jewish part. If I'm saying that right to mean restorative justice, that means to seek out the vulnerable, to take steps to advocate and join with them, to build relationships, to build a beloved community, that that impact, that alter the very structures that foist barriers and perpetuate harm. This is very much part of the the tradition of the Jewish people starting from the time of Moses.

But I want to also say this is not about these poor people. These poor people. We have to do something for them. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm not talking about us saving people. We need to serve them. But it's also about how do we listen, How do we support and partner with people to build community, to remove barriers, to uplift everyone so I want to start with an example to help us distinguish between mercy, which we may be more familiar with and justice.

And so I'm going to ask Lenore and Chris Berger to come up on stage or from behind the curtain. Oh, yes. And we're going to read a story for you, a parable, if you will, and you're going have a part to read. So we're going to read part. You are the villagers in this story and so on. The screen is going to be your part.

And you should know by now that if I'm on stage, there is audience participation. So you'll have your part to read. You're the villagers. Once there was a small village by a river. Fishers caught fish to feed their families, others to sell that market. Many people depended on this river for their livelihood.

Narrator: One day, something unusual happened at the river. A fish was preparing for the morning when they noticed a strange object floating in the river.

Fisher: From the shoreline. I could see this small basket floating down the river. I'd never seen anything like it, so I waited out to take a closer look. At first I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a baby floating down the river.

Narrator: The fisherman quickly rescued the baby and ran to tell the village. When the villagers saw the baby, they had compassion on her. A family volunteered to care for the baby and all was well.

Fisher: The next day I went back to the river for my daily routine. To my surprise, I saw two more baskets floating down the river. I rescued them and ran back to the town with the babies.

Narrator: The villagers were shocked by this discovery, so they went to discuss the situation with the village council.

Villagers: What are we going to do about the babies in the river?

Mayor: Let's set up a rescue system.

Narrator: Soon. Many in the village were involved in the many tasks of the rescue work, rescuing the babies that came down the river, taking care of their needs, integrating them into the life of the village. Before long, however, the village became exhausted. With all the rescue work, some villagers suggested they go upstream to discover how all these babies were getting in the river in the first place.

Villagers: Was there a natural disaster? Was someone deliberately throwing them in out of hate? Was an even more exhausted village abandoning them out of hopelessness?

Narrator: A huge controversy erupted in the village and they argued about what to do.

Mayor: We are barely keeping up with the current flow of babies. Every possible hand is needed to save the babies.

Fisherman: Why don't we find out how these babies are getting in the river? Perhaps we could repair the situation upstream that would save the babies and eliminate the need for costly rescue operations down here. Don't you see? If we find out, we can solve the problem? And no more babies will be harmed?

Mayor: I think that's too risky. Too costly.

Villagers: Yes, it's too risky. It's not for us to fix their problem. Besides, how would we occupy ourselves if we had no more babies to save?

Narrator: So the village continued to rescue the babies and the fish continued to wonder where all the babies were coming from.

Thank you. Good job out there. So in the story, the fish are in. The townspeople rescued intended the babies what they found in the river.

The fishermen called out for justice to go up the river to see why the babies were being abandoned, to seek a solution for that. That was the work of justice. Taking action to address the root of the problem, not just hand the consequence says later. And I don't mean to say that there's something wrong with mercy. Mercy is part of what we are called to do, but it's not the only part of what we're called to do.

But what's what's not the town you villagers out there from seeking and joining with the other community upstream to find out solutions? Was it fear? Was it apathy? Was it selfishness? Did the magnitude of the problem just seem too large? Maybe they felt like it was just someone else's problem. Why? These babies were coming down the river. Maybe those people upstream should solve their own problems and don't really deserve the support.

I mean, after all, what kind of people throw babies into a river like the townspeople in this story? God's people throughout the Bible were routinely flagrantly sinful, unmerciful and unjust. Let's pause to recall what Jesus taught us. These are called the greatest commandments. From the Book of Matthew. Teacher What is the most important command, most important commandment in the law of Moses?

Jesus replied, You must love the Lord, your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. Also from the book of Deuteronomy, the second is equally important Love your neighbor as yourself. That's from the Book of Leviticus. The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.

So what does Jesus mean? The some or all of the law and the prophets. This is an illustration of the Prophet Jeremiah after he was arrested and will be taken into exile from the Kingdom of Judah up there. And when we talk about the law in the prophets, we can talk about Moses back in the old, old part of the Old Testament as the law bringer.

Right. He came down off the mountain, had those ten rules, got it inscribed on tablets for him. Those ten rules, by the way, can be summed up in loving God and loving people, loving the Lord, loving your neighbors. So he brought these rules down and people were happy for a while. But the leaders of the Jewish people made more and more and more rules.

Much of Deuteronomy in Leviticus is filled up with all these rules that the people tried to institute in some ways to try to legislate their relationship with God and to set themselves apart from the neighboring groups, the neighboring kingdoms in the region. But soon enough, with all these rules in the books and all these laws that they were supposed to abide by, people were still not satisfied.

They were not happy with their lives. And they looked around and said, Hey, those folks over there, they got a king. Can we get one of those? And they begged God. Can we get one of these kings? Because look how they rule and keep things organized and protect their people from the invading forces that are out there in the world.

I think I was like, you know, I don't think that's a that's not a good idea. You really don't don't want a king. But they demanded it. No, we really, really we need a king God, because we're just we can't do this without a king and God's like, I'm right here. You can do this. Now, fine. God sends them a king King song.

Not so great. But the king David and the King Solomon. And they have a prosperous and peaceful sort of kingdom. They're making war with people around them, by the way. But the kingdom was prosperous, and the people, I guess, were happy. But soon, the weight of ruling after David and after Solomon became corrupt and the kingdom split. There were civil war, there was strife, and the Kingdom of David and Solomon split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah.

I know you wanted the Bible history lesson, right? You need about. It's one of two kingdoms and they really only followed God when it suited them and it made them vulnerable to invasion. And it made the kingdoms and the rulers, people rife with corruption, with greed, with brokenness. So God said, I told you so. I imagine that's what he said.

If you read between the lines, I told you so this is going to happen. If you relied on earthly things to manage your problems. So God sent prophets, many of them, to these falling, failing kingdoms to urge them to reconnect with God's kingdom. And so we hear from the Prophet Isaiah, who was prophesying to the Kingdom of Israel.

Not yet. Can we switch back? Thanks. No spoilers. We hear from Isaiah and I say it has a lot to say about what's going on in Israel. This is about 700 years before Christ and they say if I says this, the nation of Israel is the vineyard of the Lord of Heaven's armies, the people of Judah. It's a pleasant garden.

He expected a crop of justice, but instead he found oppression. He expected to find righteousness, but instead he had cries of violence. Jeremiah was prophesying to the Kingdom of Judah. It's about 500 years before Christ. Israel was a mess. Lots of corruption. Judah. Equally a mess. And Jeremiah made himself known. Spoilers. Yet we back up one more. Sorry.

That's where we get this right. Second service. No problem. Jeremiah made himself known. He prophesied outside. He went to the king. He made himself known. He made himself a real pain. Really, to the people of Judah. And in one exchange with. With the king, he tried to get him to recall his father, Josiah, the king's father. Josiah was known for being a good king amongst all the bad kings that were going on.

But Jeremiah says this A beautiful cedar palace does not make a great king. Your father, Josiah, also had plenty to eat and drink, but he was just and right in all his dealings. That is why God blessed him. He gave justice and help to the poor and needy and everything went well for him. Isn't that what it means to know me?

Says the Lord. But you. You have eyes only for greed and dishonesty. You murdered the innocent, oppressed the poor, and reign ruthlessly. Now, the next line throughout the Old Testament, the chroniclers, the poets and Psalms and Proverbs and the prophets, from Amos to Zephaniah. I'm showing off my prophet knowledge and there's other ones in the middle, but they echo the same call.

You see in Isaiah, you see the Jeremiah, you see it in Amos, You see it in Joseph. You see it in Zachariah. You see it in Malachi. You see it in Micah. He is shown you. Oh, mortal. What is good? And what does the Lord, your God require of you to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.

You should know that in the Bible, when things are said in threes, God really means it to act justly, to love, mercy, to walk humbly with God. And the humility part is important because it reminds us, one, that we're God's people, one and two, that we're doing God's work. And three, that he's in charge of us so that when we are acting justly and showing mercy, we are doing God's work right under his leadership for his kingdom.

And I could go on with the prophets and I would be happy to cite my sources. If you want to talk to me later, I got them in my bag back there. But the prophet Zachariah also was talking to the people of God,

and this is what Zachariah had to say in Zachariah seven. This is what the Lord of Heaven's armies say, judged fairly and show mercy and kindness to one another.

Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners, foreigners and the poor, and do not scheme against each other. Your ancestors refuse to listen to this message. Your ancestors refused to listen to this message. They stubbornly turned away and they put their fingers in their ears to keep from hearing. They made their hearts as hard as stone. So as the people of God continue to falter and we're conquered again and again, the Assyrians wiped out Israel.

The Babylonians wiped out Judah and took people off into exile. The leaders struggled, as you might expect, to hold things together, and they failed to reflect on the feelings of their ancestors. We failed to reflect on what God wanted for their ancestors. Things under the Romans. We're no different. This is the mightiest empire that they had ever experienced, that the world actually had ever experienced.

And under the Romans, the people of God clung to those laws, those laws that they had written under Moses, those laws that the Kings of Judah and Israel ignored or followed when it suited them. And they clung to those laws so strictly that it became how they did things right. And that meant they were trapped in power. They were trapped with the corruption that came along with that.

So when we hear about Jesus flipping tables in the temple right in corrupting where his father was. That's because the laws said you had to have a certain sacrifice and you had to bring you could only bring certain things into the temple. So you to stop there, exchange whatever money you had. Some people took their cut and then you had your sacrifice that you could use in the temple.

So the law in this sense became so important that they created these other rules that people profited from. In any case, I digress. I can go on about Rome and all that stuff. But the prophets and Isaiah's time and Jeremiah's time from Amos to Zephaniah promised something different a savior, Messiah, a mighty advocate who for who would fulfill God's desire to have such a bold relationship with humans as to bring his peaceful kingdom, His just kingdom to earth.

And so in the Prophet Isaiah again, in chapter 42, repeated in the book of Matthew, we hear I put my spirit upon him. He will bring justice to the nations. He will not shout or raise his voice in public. He will not crush the weakest reed or put out a flickering candle. He will bring justice to all who have been wronged.

He will not falter or lose heart until justice prevails throughout the earth.

So we don't often think about Jesus and justice from the very beginning, from the days of the prophets to the Gospels, we hear about Jesus in justice. In fact, when Mary discovered that she was bringing God's Son into the world, Luke records her song of praise, of being chosen for this great, important task. But she also prophesies in the name of her son, and she says this for the mighty one is holy.

And he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things. He has scattered the proud and hearty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.

That's the mother of Jesus telling us that her son is about to do great things that have not been done. They've been promised by the prophets and will be fulfilled in his work. And so when Jesus begins his

ministry in Nazareth, Luke records this for us. He reads from Isaiah and Jesus says this The spirit of the Lord is upon me for His anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim The captives will be released. The blind will see and the oppressed will be set free. And that the time of the Lord's favor has come. And so Jesus is teaching in the Spirit with the spirit of the prophets before him. And He is part of the ministry, sends out the disciples and the Gospels record for us.

When he sends out the disciples, he tells them that they're going to stand in front of governors and kings, and they might be afraid, but the spirit of the Lord is going to give them the right words to share the good news. So as Isaiah said before, Kings and Jeremiah's before kings, the disciples stand before governors and kings.

Jesus stands before the rulers of that world. And when I say that Jesus is in the spirit of the prophets, I'm talking about the Jesus that like is on fire. All right. We often think about Jesus as sort of I mean, he was very peaceful and gentle. But there's a part of Jesus that is on fire. This feels much.

The next slide. There's point, Matthew, where he's had enough. The Pharisees and the leaders have been pursuing him, trying to trap him into saying something that's going to get him in trouble. And he's been arguing with them for most of the book of Matthew. And you see this in other gospels as well. And we get to the Chapter 23 of Matthew and what's sometimes called the seven woes or the Seven Sorrows where Jesus lets them know what he's really about, what God's kingdom really should look like.

And he's particularly annoyed that they are so worried about the law that they have forgotten what it means to be God's people. And so in Matthew 23, 23, one of the woes is this What sorrow awaits you? Teachers of the religious law and you Pharisees, hypocrites, for you are careful to tie even the tiniest income from your herb gardens.

But you ignore the most important aspects of the law. Justice, mercy, faithfulness. Those three things. Justice. Mercy. Faithfulness. You should tithe. Yes. But do not neglect the more important things. Right. Jesus is reminding them loudly on fire that the law is important, that he's there actually to fulfill the law. Right. But the law is not so important that we should forget what the people of God are really about.

Justice, mercy, faithfulness, or humbleness? Yes, With the Scripture, you can see Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount talking about these same things to the people in a part of Beatitudes in Matthew five. He says this God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied.

God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy, mercy, justice, faithfulness. And Jesus acts as our example of this. This is a picture I took. It's kind of hard to see when I was in Minneapolis a few years ago, and this is Westminster Presbyterian Church. It was across the street from my hotel, the beautiful old church there in Minneapolis, beautiful stained windows.

But along their wall, they had this quote from Professor Cornel West, which is justice is what love looks like in public. And that we love our God with our whole hearts and that we love our neighbors as ourselves. And we do that publicly in ways that show what God's kingdom is supposed to look like. And so we think about Jesus.

He's as our example for this, right? He's he's what love looks like in public. And in moments when things were rough. Jesus stepped into the breach to speak truth to power and challenge the very systems that were creating harm in his time. So I give you three examples of when this happens. And there are different gospels and there's other examples in the gospels by going to pick three.

To give you an example, you know my coffee is feeling pours. It's possible. So one of the problems that the Pharisees had with Jesus, and you see it several times in the Gospel is that he healed people and fed people when he wasn't supposed to be. So one of the laws, one of the rules was you weren't supposed to do anything on the Sabbath, right?

No. Working on the Sabbath. And if you worked on the Sabbath, it was supposedly sinful reviling in law, you could get in trouble with the people who were in charge of these sorts of things. And so we see Jesus healing and feeding on the Sabbath on numerous occasions. But in this particular passage in Luke six, Jesus was healing a man.

And Luke records that this man had was disabled in some way, had a deformed hand or some sort of problem. Right. That kept him marginalized. It kept him on the outside. He couldn't work, wasn't included in parts of things. And so this man was standing outside the synagogue while Jesus was teaching. And this teaches religious law, the Pharisees, the ones he all that Matthew 23, were watching closely to see if he would heal the man's hand because they plan to accuse him of working on the Sabbath if he healed the man.

But Jesus knew their thoughts. Luke tells us, he said to the man with with the with the disability, come stand in front of everyone. So he draws this man out from the margins, from the shadows stands called him to stand beside him. So the man came forward and Jesus says to his critics, I have a question for you.

Does the law permit good deeds on the Sabbath or is it a day for doing evil? Is this a day to save life or to destroy it? And Luke says, Jesus looked around at them one by one and then said to the man, Hold out your hand. So the man held out his hand and it was restored. At this.

The enemies of Jesus were wild with rage and began to discuss what to do with them. So he enters this moment. He calls this man who had been on the margins for so long. Right. Heals him in front of these people and challenges them with that. Look, one by one to say which is more important, the law or justice changing the system.

Pastor Mandy shared a few weeks ago if you were here about from passage from the Gospel of John the woman caught in adultery, which was a punishable sin, I don't know where. I've always been like, Where is the dude who is involved? Right? They dragged this woman up. Somebody else was there. But that's a story for a different day.

That's how actually the laws are written. Many of the laws in the Deuteronomy laws are talking about like they punish the one party, but not both parties. And any any case. So Jesus is teaching and as he's speaking, the teachers and the Pharisees bring this woman who have been caught in the act of adultery and I'm taking some liberty with it, with the writing, because they said they put her there.

I don't imagine that. I imagine they're dragging this woman and there's a crowd and they throw her as Jesus's feet while he's teaching teacher. They say to Jesus, This woman has been caught in an act of

adultery. The law of Moses says to Stoner, What do you say? And again, they're trying to trap him in the saying something they could use against him.

But again, we see Jesus coming into the breach. So this woman is at his feet. And I imagine that he comes alongside her. And the gospel records this strange moment where Jesus kneels down and he starts writing in the dirt. And in my mind, I'm like, He's just drawing a line right in that sand because doesn't tell us what he wrote.

But it tells us enough to say that in a moment where he is surrounded by people of power, he comes alongside this woman and stoops down in humility and draws a line in the sand. That's the liberty I'm taking with the Scripture.

But they kept demanding an answer from him as he's down in the dirt with this woman. And so he stands up, and I'm a mom, right? And so, like, there's a moment, like, when your kids are really messing around and you're mad and you're sitting there like you stand up and they know that they'd better get their act together.

So they imagine Jesus is doing right. He's with this woman, He's being humble, he's showing her mercy, and he stands up to confront this crowd. So he stood up and he said, All right, you without sin, pick up a stone. Then he stooped down again next to this woman and continued with her writing in the dust. When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one.

Beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd. Let he stood up again. And I imagine he left this woman with her. With him. Where are your accusers? Didn't even one stay to condemn? You know, Lord, she said, Jesus said, Neither do I go and sin no more. So in this moment. Right.

Things are happening. Jesus is showing us humility. He's showing us mercy for this person. This woman content, adultery, again, preparing to die, to be executed for what she had done. Someone from the margins. And he brings her to him and he challenges the very authority of those leaders in their unjust system. The third thing I'll share from you is from the Gospel of Luke.

It's recorded in the other Gospels as well. I just picked Luke's first because I was already there. This is a moment in the garden where Jesus and the disciples been praying all night. The moment 70 before He is going to go to his death, he knows what's going to happen. And as the night is waning, the Roman guards and the high priest and their entourage come tromping into this garden.

Judas has betrayed Jesus and the other disciples saw. I guess finally what was about to happen, and they exclaimed, Lord, should we fight? We brought our swords and one of them, one of the gospels, says Peter. The other ones don't mention it, but one of the disciples reaches out and slices and cuts the ear off the high priest's slave.

But Jesus again comes into the middle, and He's got his disciples clamoring over here. And these what I imagine to be scary Roman guards and the high priest, someone that had been tracking him and tracing him all this time to trap him into doing something. This is a moment of heightened tension, of fear, right. And bloodshed. But Jesus said, no more of this, and he touched the slaves ear and he healed him.

Then Jesus spoke to the leading priests and the captains of the Temple guard and the elders who had come for him. Am I some dangerous revolutionary? He asked that you would come here with swords



and clubs to arrest me. Why didn't you arrest me at the temple? I was there all day. But this is your moment. The time when the power of darkness reigns.

So in this most dangerous moment, in fact, every moment where Jesus is dealing with the Pharisees, whether it's they're trying to trap him about teaching the Sabbath, whether he's standing alongside this adulterous woman in the most dangerous moments, particularly in front of these Roman guards, swords drawn, knowing he's going to his death in the most dangerous moments when the selfishness and the hatred and the violence of the system they're in locked in, each of us revealed itself.

Jesus literally stepped in and advocated and healed the lowest person in the crowd. Those individuals he helped. They experienced his mercy. Jesus showed the rest of us what building his kingdom looks like. So I want to tell you some opportunities that we have in Horizons right now for thinking about justice work. Right. Because I hope that you feel compelled to think more deeply about some of these issues.

And there's some resources. If you go to horizons, that church for justice, Mercy, our Justice and Mercy team, which I am part of, has various resources, lots of resources from the Methodist Church and other places where you can learn more about where harm is happening and how we as people of God can not only extend mercy but act for justice.

It's been a week for me, so I mentioned I teach the university and one of the challenges that my students face, my students color. You know, we were talking about what happened recently with this death of this young man, a black man with who had been confronted by the police and beaten by them. And my students say to me, I'm afraid I'm afraid.

I'm afraid for being who I am in the world that harms me, that harms us to know that people are afraid. I have friends whose whose kids might be called different, who want to express who they are in different ways. They're afraid. They're afraid about what laws can do and what laws can mean and how they can harm.

I have colleagues who work in policing, and it's been a hard week for Omaha police. When my police had to discharge their weapons and kill people. And that's hard on them. That's hard on them. And it's something that we can think about differently. Right. How do we best support one another? To choose peace over violence. When we talk about justice, those are the kinds of things we're talking about.

How do we, in humility, stand alongside people who are hurting, who are harmed, and who are filling in gaps where we could be doing more. So you can check out these opportunities. Another thing that's happening coming up in February and February is a study led by two of our phenomenal people on Justice and Mercy, Steve Bartels and Cory Neff leading this book study of *Between the World and Me* by Tanahashi Coates to help us understand the harms of racial injustices and what that means, how it harms people of color, how it harms communities, how it harms us.

All right. That's part of the work of justice, is understanding where these things are happening and what it means for people. The third thing, like I mentioned, is justice in action. And folks, I am super excited about this. I'm part of the board of directors. I'm part of the Criminal Justice Research steering team, and we've been having meetings with people from around the county.

There's a counterpart team focused on mental health needs in our county and. We have been talking to people, like I said, from around the county to try to understand what the needs are and where we as

people of God can help bring about justice. What can we do to bring about justice and said a few things are happening as part of that.

So we're going to you're going to meet Olivia here in a minute. Has been talking to a few of you. She's awesome. She's a staff member for Justice in Action. We're going to have a meeting here at church so you can hear more about what our justice network is doing and horizons. Olivia's talked to a few of you already, but we're building a network of people to be part of this ministry, to be part of this action.

We're going to have a community wide rally on March 30th where the two different groups, criminal justice reform and mental health support, are going to present to the to the people where we have identified problems and what potential solutions that we intend to ask community leaders for. And so then to meet me and my action that you see there on May 4th, the goal is to have 1200 people of faith meet together with community leaders.

So that's like the city council or the county commissioners or the mayor or whomever we identify as being the people who can enact these changes to present to them what we as people of God see as a solution and actionable solution for problems around criminal justice reform and mental health needs. And right now, where we're sort of landing is thinking about how do we help alleviate crowding at the county jail, What systems can we address that?

Can we change? Can we fund to help alleviate that crowding? And what can we do to support people in crisis who are experiencing mental health crisis in our county that have nowhere to go? So we're focusing on these two issues. These are justice issues. Yes, we want to extend mercy to people who are incarcerated, people who are struggling with the justice system.

Yes, we want to extend mercy and we should extend mercy to people who are experiencing mental health problems. But we can also do something about that that is bigger, that is bolder, that is about God's kingdom and the justice and peace that comes with it. So one last slide. Just as I went over a few seconds, we're going to get the rest of this together and then we're going to pray.

So let me ask you again, what does the Lord, your God require of you to act justly, love, mercy and walk humbly with God? Let's pray together. God, Thank you so much for these people, for your power, for your words, and for your son. We pray that you enliven our hearts for your work. And I'm going to say the words of Bishop.

What he white because I promise to make these folks uncomfortable. God. And now may the Lord torment you. May the Lord keep before you the faces of the hungry, the lonely, the rejected, the despised. May the Lord afflict you with the pain, for the hurt, the wounded, the oppressed, abused and victims of violence. May God you with agony, a burning thirst for justice and righteousness.

May the Lord give you courage and strength and compassion to make ours a better world, to make your community a better community, to make your church a better church. And may you do your best to make it so. An altar. And after you have done your best, may the Lord grace you with His peace. But the people say amen and thank you so much.