

Sermon Starter – God’s Justice Restores

Micah 6:8 and John 8:3-11

a) **Introduction:** In most of our societies, the notion that justice means retribution has predominated. In the prophetic message of the Bible and in Jesus, however, we find another paradigm: restorative justice.

b) **Comparison between retributive and restorative justice:** Restorative justice recognizes that in a conflict, whether interpersonal or social, broken relationships exist. In the process of doing justice, people and their needs are central, and justice is more than simply compliance with a legal and institutional framework. Retributive justice is based on safeguarding the legal order of a society and punishing the offenders without regard for the reparation and restitution of persons and broken relationships in a conflict.

c) **Jesus’ example in John 8:3-11:** In this passage Jesus takes a restorative position when faced with a woman accused of adultery. Jesus does not justify her action, yet he is interested in her as a person and her need to be restored. Moses’ law considered the option of stoning and condemning her alone. Although there was another person involved, only she was held responsible. Jesus showed another option: God’s justice that restores.

d) **The prophet Micah issues God’s call for mercy and humility before God:** Those who intend to do justice or promote justice must consider God’s other two demands: mercy and humility. Mercy implies our ability to put ourselves in the place of others before judging them, to know their particular situation and needs, and to deeply feel what is happening to them and their reality, seeking only their well-being. Humility before God involves the ability to recognize our own mistakes before judging those of others; to desist from our individualistic pretensions and to think about others; to recognize our inabilities before God; and to depend on God in our judgments and actions.

e) **Conclusion:** In the present, as in the past, the community of Jesus’ disciples is called to exercise justice that restores. To achieve this we must learn to see others with eyes of mercy and to humbly recognize our need for God. We can promote justice and be witnesses to justice according to God’s heart only if we exercise Micah’s demands and follow Jesus’ example in our life and actions.

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