

Grace and Peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Isaiah 56.1: ***Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.”***

1. ...“***my salvation will come, and my righteousness [justice] be revealed.***” takes us back to the very beginning.

- Genesis 1 tells us that God created a perfect paradise so that He could live in a perfect relationship with perfect people forever.
- Genesis 3 tells us that Adam and Eve rejected paradise, tried to cover up their sin, and hid themselves from God. But, God sought them out, forgave them and promised that “***my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.***”
- this **righteousness of God [justice]** cost God the death of His Son.

God, in His perfect timing sought pagan Abraham and established the **Covenant of Divine Commitment** with him. ‘Salvation History’ began: God promised that through Abraham’s offspring ***salvation will come, and His righteousness be revealed.*** This promise looked forward to Jesus the Messiah; to his perfect life, innocent death and glorious resurrection of Jesus the Messiah for the full forgiveness of all sin. God promised never to revoke this covenant, even if Abraham’s offspring failed this faith relationship.

2. ***Keep justice, and do righteousness*** refers back to the Exodus. God had rescued Israel from slavery in Egypt, and led them through the Red Sea. A month later He established the **Covenant of Human Obligation** with them at Mt Sinai. This covenant obligated Israel to ***keep justice, and do righteousness:***

- To treat people impartially and fairly according to God’s law.
- To care the vulnerable: the widow, orphan, the foreigner in their midst.
- If Israel failed keep this covenant, God would revoke it and punish Israel.

3. Isaiah 56.1 looks back to previous chapters of Isaiah.

- Chapters 1-39 accuse Israel of failing to ***keep justice, and do righteousness.*** They will cease to be a nation and will go into exile.
- Chapters 1-39 the birth of the Messiah... ***who will establish His kingdom and uphold it with justice and righteousness*** [Isaiah 9.6-7].
- Chapters 40-55 introduce a ‘Servant’ who will ***bring forth justice to the nations.*** [42.1]

4. In Isaiah 56 the ‘Servant’ speaks. ***Thus says the LORD: “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.”***

- The ‘Servant’ is Jesus the Messiah.
- Through the ‘Servant’ the justice and mercy of God meet.
 - The foreigner and Eunuch find joy in the house of prayer [Isaiah 56.1-9].
 - The Canaanite woman’s faith is praised and her daughter healed. [Matt. 15.21-28, today’s gospel].

- The lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others are healed. [Matt. 15.29-31]

5. The 'Servant' [Isaiah 56.1] speaks to us today: **“Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my righteousness be revealed.”** This calls the church to be the place where God’s justice and mercy meet in Christ.

These are some headlines of the week as I put these notes together:

- 21 shot, 1 fatally at Washington DC party. Washington D.C. police officer is 'fighting for her life' after shooting kills teen and injures 20 early Sunday morning.
- The looting that erupted in Chicago’s shopping district on Sunday evening was sparked by false social media posts that the Chicago Police Department (CPD) had shot an unarmed, 15-year-old boy.
- Portland Antifa Rioters Injure Police After Returning To Station They Previously Tried To Burn Down.
- Carmen Best, black female police chief, driven out by Seattle Council.
- As murder rates rise in cities across America, Minneapolis leads the pack.

God’s justice and mercy seem not to meet in these headlines. Rather, justice is and hate meet...justice and anger meet ...justice and intimidation meet...justice with an agenda meet. They remind us that these are troubled, dangerous and uncertain times. These are also predictable times and an opportunity for the church.

6. Again, God intends His justice and mercy in Christ to greet the world through us...knowing that there is at least one person God has placed in our life whom He is preparing to **receive His coming salvation**...who is ready for God’s **righteousness to be revealed**...and desires to be a fellow traveler to **keep justice and do righteousness** along the spiritual minefield that is our world today.

7. That is our daily mission as we await the day when finally **‘God’s salvation will come and His righteousness be revealed’** to create the new heaven and earth where God will forever live in a perfect relationship with His perfect people in a perfect paradise forever.

Grace and Peace to you from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray for the church, the world, and all people according to their need.

Dear Father, Thank you for all Canaanite women, men, and children in our world. Teach us not to send them away, but to be your means of justice, touching their lives with healing grace. Lord, in your mercy, *please hear our prayer.*

Grow your church, this church, in being known by love, to live by faith, and be a voice of hope. Use us to gather the outcasts to find joy in this house of prayer. Lord

Strengthen Christians who are persecuted because of Jesus, to speak, act, and pray with humility, boldness, graciousness, and steadfast endurance. Lord, in your mercy,

Teach all leaders to keep your justice, do your righteousness, to be instruments of your deliverance; that their governing power reflects your mercy.

Teach us to put a hedge around your justice, practice your righteousness, be instruments of your salvation in our thinking, speaking and living in this world in which you have placed us.

Lord, as schools approach opening day in a world clouded by pandemic and upheaval, we pray for students and teachers, parents and aides. Keep them safe, and help them flourish. Bless our seminaries and Christian colleges and schools with faithfulness to Jesus and love of neighbor, of wisdom, and of virtue.

Lord Jesus, in healing a Gentile woman's daughter, you showed that your justice, mercy and salvation are for any who call upon your name. And so, we pray for people distressed by afflictions to body, mind, or spirit – especially: {List}. Be gracious to them, and bless them; and show them the light of your countenance. Draw them, and all who care for them, ever closer to your Son; and bestow upon them the joy of your mercy. Lord, in

We thank you for the lives of all who died trusting in your promised mercy. As you kept them in faith, so keep us united in the unmatched joy of life in your house – not as pet dogs under the table; nor as strangers or as guests; but as your children being known by love, living by faith and being voices of hope. Lord,

Hear our prayer, O Father, and grant all that glorifies you and builds up your people. This we ask for Jesus' sake. **Amen.**