



MIND
session page

What is Justice Anyway?

Isaiah 42:1-9 | Session 9.02

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Facilitator: In advance of the session
- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Start by asking:

- Without consulting a dictionary, how would you define the word "justice?"
- Some people believe justice is a basic human need, something each human being desires for herself or himself. What do you think?
- Why do we have an innate desire for things to be "just and fair," at least as we understand the terms?

Content

Read [Isaiah 42:1-19](#), then watch the Bible Background Video and ask

- What would “justice” mean to the original audience for this scripture?
- In what ways might they have imagined God’s justice coming?
- Look at the description of the servant in verses 1-4. How will he bring about God’s justice and how do you think this compared to the kind of “hero” the people were looking for in that time?
- How do we see Jesus’ ministry reflected in this description of the servant?
- What kind of hope does God’s servant offer for those who feel nearly broken or burnt-out (v.3)?
- What “credentials” does God offer in verse 5 and why might God begin this promise by recalling what God has already done?
- For these refugees who felt God had abandoned them, what comfort does God offer in this passage?
- What will the relationship of the first listeners be to the other people of the world?
- Taken as a whole, what vision of justice is offered by this passage?

Closure

Continue by asking:

- How do you feel about Nikki’s way of talking about justice – not as punishment for those who have done something wrong, but as a great “leveling?”
- In what ways might one definition fit into the other?
- What might God’s justice look like for people who live in dangerous places such as war-torn countries or in places where Christianity is illegal?
- What might God’s justice look like for those who live in relative comfort and safety?
- If we seek or pray for justice in some situation, why is it sometimes easy to forget that our idea of “justice” might be unfair to someone else?
- In what way are today's scriptures a model for the justice we may need to seek in today's world?
- What can we do to promote justice for everyone, as opposed to simply the kind of "justice" that makes things best for us?

Close with prayer.

Writer: Jon Parks



CURRENT

session page

What is Justice Anyway?

Isaiah 42:1-9 | Session 9.02

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Find links on the Mystic webpage for this session.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Share [this story](#), and [this one](#), about judges who gave out unusual sentences and ask:

- How do you feel about these stories and why?
- To what degree do you think Justice was done by the judge who pronounced the sentence?
- What would have been the most just way to punish each of the individuals in these stories, and why?
- What do you think is the relationship between laws, as they are written, and true "justice?"

Content

Read Isaiah 42:1-19, then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- If you were living at the time these scriptures were written, what do you think your experience of "justice" might have been?
- What do you think that the original hearers of this scripture were hoping justice would be, going forward, and why?
- How do you feel about this statement? *In today's text in verse 4 we learn that this justice is not reserved for any one group of people, which may have felt frustrating to the Israelites who were in captivity in Babylon. But rather, God's justice is for all on the earth...*
- To what degree is justice a universal concept, versus one that depends on the perspective of the one seeking it?
- What does the understanding of God's justice, as presented here, tell us about our own relationships with God?

Closure

Share this article on Americans' attitude toward the fairness of wealth distribution, reminding the group of some of the key points from the article:

- *63% of Americans say money and wealth distribution is unfair*
- *These attitudes are substantially unchanged over past 30 years*
- *Slight majority of 52% favor heavy taxes on rich as fix*
- *Those with annual household incomes of at least \$75,000 (54%) are considerably less likely than those with incomes below \$30,000 (74%) to agree that wealth should be more evenly distributed.*
- *.... nearly half of Americans (46%) are strong redistributionists – in the sense that they believe the distribution of wealth and income is not fair, and endorse heavy taxes on the rich as a way of redistributing wealth.*
- *One in four are in essence free-market advocates – sanguine about the distribution of wealth and income and not supporting heavy taxes on the rich.*
- *Another 16% say the income and wealth distribution is not fair, but don't endorse heavy taxes as a remedy.*

- *A small percentage have the somewhat contradictory views of believing that the distribution is fair but favoring heavy taxes on the rich.*

Ask the group:

- How do you feel about the information uncovered in this survey and why?
- To what degree does this report coincide with or challenge the way that most of the people you know think?
- In what ways do you think this report speaks to the concept of "justice" and why?
- What are some other aspects of living in our society that reflect our attitudes toward justice, whether positively and negatively?
- In what ways do we need to come to some terms with ourselves in order to accept a larger concept of justice?
- What are some ways by which we can bring true justice to others?

Close with a prayer

Writer: Erin Robinson Hall



MYSTIC
session page

What is Justice Anyway?

Isaiah 42:1-9 | Session 9.02

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media)
- Place multiple unlit candles on a central table. One candle should be designated a 'Christ Candle' and be larger than the rest.
- Arrange your chairs in a circle or other configuration that promotes a sense of community.
- Provide a copy of the handout "quotes" for each person.

Context

Read aloud Isaiah 42:1-19 then play the Bible Background Video

In today's session, the group will explore their understandings of justice and be encouraged to look within themselves to find that instance of justice denied that most calls to their hearts.

Reflection

Start by having a volunteer light the Christ Candle and lead the group in an opening prayer.

- Often the work of justice is characterized as loud, active and possibly even violent. In what ways have you seen people 'work for justice' that follows this particular script?
- To what degree are these the best means for bringing justice in the world?

Encourage volunteers to read each of the provided quotes, then ask:

- Which quote captivated you most?
- What thoughts did it prompt for you?

While the group sits silently in prayer, invite each person to call to mind a situation – personally or globally – that demands justice, and, in silence, light a candle from the Christ candle to represent their concern. The situation may be named or not.

Voice a benediction once everyone has had a chance to light a candle.

Writer: Jim Dant



MEDIA
session page

What is Justice Anyway?

Isaiah 42:1-9 | Session 9.02

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
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- Encourage your group to listen to the Faithelement podcast ahead of the next session (Share the link via email or social media).

Context

Play the Scary Good Time video and ask:

- When have you or your friends played pranks on each other and how did it go?
- What kinds of things have you done to get even with someone playing a trick on you?
- In what ways did the victim of your revenge respond, and what did the two of you learn from it?

Content

Read Isaiah 42:1-19, then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask questions like these:

- What would it be like to have been a forced refugee in a strange land?
- How could the Hebrew people have found any joy in their slave responsibilities?
- What does it mean that this servant was God's servant?
- What characterizes God's justice?
- What does God say to the servant from this passage and why?
- How do you think justice and mercy work together in God's will?
- What would justice for all look like in our day?

Closure

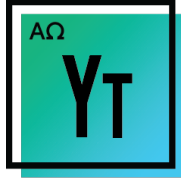
Tell the group: *In an area of Canada, the police decided to take drastic measures to bring justice to all regarding drunk driving. I would like to point out that the police have apologized to the rock band since instituting this brand of justice.*

Play the [Nickelback video](#) and ask:

- How much punishment do you think drunk drivers should receive, in general?
- What do you think of their brand of justice and why?
- What do you think God's view of their brand of justice would be?
- How would our idea of justice and mercy change if we viewed life seeing all people as in God's image even if they break laws and/or enjoy Nickelback?

Close in prayer

Writer: Jon Self



YOUTH
session page

What is Justice Anyway?

Isaiah 42:1-9 | Session 9.02

Before the Session

Facilitator: In advance of the session

- Review today's scripture text and the session activities to help better facilitate the discussion.
- Have the Bible Background Video ready to view.
- Have a whiteboard or butcher paper with markers that you can use for a brainstorming session (See Closure)
- Listen to the FaithElement podcast for this session.
- Use the social media prompts on this session's web page to help youth begin engaging the session ahead of their gathering.

Intro

Show the [Ben Hur clip](#) and ask:

- Why do you think people sometimes feel the need to take justice in to their own hands?
- Why do we doubt that justice will happen?
- To what degree do you think bringing justice is our role or God's role and why?
- How does God bring about justice in the world?

Context

Play a game of "Mafia" where you produce a deck of cards, with one specific card designating the "mafia" and another designating the "policeman." All the other cards will designate regular townspeople. Have the group sit in a circle and give each person a card, encouraging everyone to keep theirs a secret, and remind them that the goal of the game is to stay alive.

The game begins as you tell the townspeople to go "to sleep" so everyone will need to close their eyes and put their heads down. Announce that the "mafia" should wake up and perform a "hit" by pointing to their victim, then go back to sleep. Continue by telling the "policeman" to wake up, at which point they should point to someone they suspect, and you will, in silence, either affirm or deny their choice. Put the policeman go to sleep, and have everyone wake up, then tell everyone about what happened during the night, specifically about who was killed (a funny story adds to the game). Invite the "townspeople" to name the other group members they suspect as being the mafia, giving their reasons for their accusations, and giving the accused an opportunity to defend themselves. After each person is accused, the townspeople get to vote if that person is guilty or innocent, and those voted as "guilty" are eliminated from the game. Continue through several nights until either the mafia is caught by the police, eliminated for the game, or successfully kills all the townspeople.

After the game, ask:

- How did you feel playing this game?
- What was it like when you were accused of something that you did not do?
- What most affected your ability to figure out who was the "mafia?"
- How do you feel about the justice that was served in this game and why?
- When does justice prevail in our real world?
- Why does it seem that people don't really get what they deserve?
- How do you feel when justice is not done and people get away with stuff?

Content

Read Isaiah 42:1-19, then watch the Bible Background Video.

Ask your group:

- Why might the Israelites in this passage have thought that justice was not being done?
- What might justice have looked like for the people who had destroyed their way of life?
- In what ways might this passage have given them hope?
- What do you think is the definition of justice?
- According to this passage, in what ways is God going to bring justice to the world?
- In what ways does Jesus fulfill the role of the servant who will bring justice?
- How is this battle for justice still being fought?
- What role do you have in bringing justice to this world?

Closure

Spend some time with the group brainstorming ways that they can be active participants in the justice that God is bringing to the world. Focus on questions like:

- In what areas of your own life might you be anxiously awaiting justice to be done?
- What areas of our world need justice to be done?
- What marginalized people groups need justice?
- What does justice look like at your school and in your church?
- In what ways do you see God actively working to bring justice to each of these situations?

Close this session in prayer

Writer: Don Breeden



MIX
session page

What is Justice Anyway?

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Facilitator: In advance of the session

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Context (From the Current Session Page)

Share [this story](#), and [this one](#), about judges who gave out unusual sentences and ask:

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- What would have been the most just way to punish each of the individuals in these stories, and why?
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Content (From the Mind Session Page)

Read Isaiah 42:1-19, then watch the Bible Background Video and ask

- What would “justice” mean to the original audience for this scripture?
- In what ways might they have imagined God’s justice coming?
- Look at the description of the servant in verses 1-4. How will he bring about God’s justice and how do you think this compared to the kind of “hero” the people were looking for in that time?
- How do we see Jesus’ ministry reflected in this description of the servant?
- What kind of hope does God’s servant offer for those who feel nearly broken or burnt-out (v.3)?
- What “credentials” does God offer in verse 5 and why might God begin this promise by recalling what God has already done?
- For these refugees who felt God had abandoned them, what comfort does God offer in this passage?
- What will the relationship of the first listeners be to the other people of the world?
- Taken as a whole, what vision of justice is offered by this passage?

Closure (from the Media Session page)

Tell the group: *In an area of Canada, the police decided to take drastic measures to bring justice to all regarding drunk driving. I would like to point out that the police have apologized to the rock band since instituting this brand of justice.*

Play the Nickelback video and ask:

- How much punishment do you think drunk drivers should receive, in general?
- What do you think of their brand of justice and why?
- What do you think God’s view of their brand of justice would be?
- How would our idea of justice and mercy change if we viewed life seeing all people as in God’s image even if they break laws and/or enjoy Nickelback?

Close in prayer