



# COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

## And It Was Good / Week 3

### SERIES OVERVIEW

#### SERIES SUMMARY

A 4-week series about justice.

#### SERIES BOTTOM LINE

The role you can play in God's story of humankind.

#### WEEKLY BOTTOM LINES

WEEK 1: Justice says good enough isn't good enough.

WEEK 2: God is working with you when you choose to do good work.

WEEK 3: Because God is always good, God is always pursuing justice.

WEEK 4: Because good enough is never good enough, justice never stops.

### SCRIPTURE

*Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few." (Matthew 9:35-37 NLT)*

*"For I, the Lord, love justice." (Isaiah 61:8a NLT)*

*All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT).*

### NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

#### THINK ABOUT THIS

This talk invites students to take a deeper look at injustice and consider two things: Where God is and where they are in it. For some, asking the first question may be challenging. Your students may not feel comfortable expressing questions and/or doubts about God, or they may feel afraid that asking questions won't give them the answers they want. Remind students that part of growing in faith is being willing to ask difficult questions about the difficult things we see and experience in this world. Not only is God unafraid of those questions, but God is already working to show us the answer through the good work already being done in the world. The second question—where students are in the work for justice—may also be hard to ask. For some, it requires a level of self-awareness to acknowledge the part they are or aren't playing in the work toward justice. For others who may be experiencing injustice, asking them to join in may feel impossible or inappropriate, as they need someone to join in on their behalf. No matter where your students land with these questions, the goal is to lead them to see two truths more clearly: That God is already doing good work for justice in this world and that we are invited to be a part of it.

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## TEACHING OUTLINE

### INTRODUCTION

- Have you ever experienced a toddler's "why" phase? When they question every single detail of every single thing?
- Sometimes by asking, "why," toddlers stumble into some deep questions that can make you think and question things yourself.
- **INTERACTIVE: See your Teaching Script for details.**
- In this series called "And it was Good," we're talking about injustice.
- If justice is something right, fair, or equal, then injustice is just the opposite of that. So, when we talk about injustice, we're talking about the things in our world that are unfair, unequal, or not right.
- Seeing people treated poorly or experiencing difficult circumstances can make us ask difficult questions.

### TENSION

- Seeing injustice can leave us asking a lot of questions, both about the injustice itself, and the God who is supposedly in control of the world where it happens.
- Maybe you've landed on a really hard question when it comes to injustice. A question that feels difficult to ask and even more so, to answer. "*Why isn't God doing something about this?*"
- Maybe you feel nervous because asking that question out loud feels like you're questioning God.
- Maybe you're like, "*YEAH! That's exactly what I keep asking!*" You probably feel relieved that someone finally said it out loud.
- Maybe this is the very reason you're still not sure about all this Jesus and God stuff. You can't imagine yourself being a Jesus follower if He's not going to do something about the brokenness you see around you.
- No matter where we are or what our world looks like right now, God is big enough to handle our questions—even the difficult ones.

### TRUTH

- Today, we're taking a look at the eyewitness account of Matthew in a book written by one of Jesus' closest followers and friends.
- Matthew hung out with Jesus and knew what He was about. Maybe that's why he took the time to write down this thing that he saw (*Matthew 9:35 NLT*).
- Everywhere He went, Jesus had something to say (and do) about people being treated unfairly or in a way that wasn't right (*Matthew 9:36 NLT*).
- Jesus modeled for us what God is really like when it comes to injustice.
  - First, Jesus **saw**. He saw the injustice, the hurt, and the brokenness.
  - And when He saw, Jesus **cared**.
  - And when Jesus was moved to care, He moved into **action**. That's what compassion is.
- If you've ever wondered, God is FOR justice (*Isaiah 61:8a NLT*).
- Maybe you don't talk about harvesting a lot, but here Jesus was talking about work.
- That kind of work requires a lot of effort. So, when He saw what was going on, Jesus had compassion and responded by telling people it's time to get to **WORK**.
- What if God has a plan to do something about injustice. What if **WE** are the plan?
- The Apostle Paul, whose life was changed by Jesus, wrote letters to the early church and taught them what it looks like to be a Christian (*1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT*).
- Paul used the illustration of a body with its individual parts working together.

- In the same way, God designed the body of Christ, or the Church, to work together to help each other out.
- When we're talking about injustice, it's not that God isn't there or doesn't care. Instead, the Church—God's people—are called to be God's hands and feet here on Earth.
- God is doing something about injustice.

### APPLICATION

- Will you participate in what God is already doing about injustice?
- The first step is to rethink how we view injustice.
  - Rethink what it means to be a follower of Jesus.
  - Ask, "Where am I?" in the fight against injustice.
  - Find a way to work toward justice.

### LANDING

- Over and over, the Bible teaches us that God cares deeply about injustice and wants to use us to do something about it.
- This means that God's people should be known for doing something about injustice.
- Imagine the impact we could have if we took the opportunity to show people that God is FOR them and FOR helping those who are experiencing injustice.
- Imagine if the people you know would be more willing to believe God is doing something when it comes to injustice because they saw YOU doing some good and pursuing justice.

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## INTERACTIVE

This Interactive happens in the Intro section. Please see that section for more details.

What You'll Need: A series of Tik Toks where toddlers question everything and drive their families up the wall!

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## TEACHING SLIDES

All bolded words and phrases in the Teaching Script are also provided as teaching slides for Premium Tier subscribers.

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# TEACHING SCRIPT

## And It Was Good / Week 3

### BOTTOM LINE

BECAUSE GOD IS ALWAYS GOOD, GOD IS ALWAYS PURSUING JUSTICE.

### INTRODUCTION

1.5 MINUTES

Those of you who have spent time with toddlers know that they definitely keep life interesting and lively with all of their antics. They're constantly exploring, trying to figure things out and make sense of this great big world they live in. They get into cabinets and drawers they aren't supposed to. They make messes just because they're too young to know that messes involve a ton of cleaning that someone else will have to manage.

And then, as toddlers work through this exploring phase, they soon enter a stage that can be the most difficult for parents, other adults, older siblings, and friends to deal with: The stage of, "Why?". This is when a child asks that question over, and over, and over, until you're ready to pull your hair out or go hide.

"Why are you so tall?" "Why is the sky blue?" "Why is macaroni and cheese yellow?" "Why is my sister sad?" "Why did someone make her cry?" "Why did they say that?" "But why . . ." ". . . but . . . why???"

#### INTERACTIVE:

**Media Package Subscribers:** [Look for AndItWasGood\\_MediaPackage\\_Week3\\_WhyWhyWhy\\_XP3HS to accompany this Interactive. Interested in purchasing the annual media package? Look for the Media Package Add-On in your curriculum dashboard.](#)

*[Communicator Note: Find a series of Tik Toks where toddlers are questioning everything and driving their families up the wall! Show the videos at this point in the talk and then say something like. . .]*

*Sometimes in life we deal with questions that are fairly simple to answer. But sometimes we're faced with questions that we struggle to understand or find the answers to. Sometimes life forces us to ask deep questions about why certain things happen, how things got so bad, and what can be done about them.*

In this series called "And it was Good," we're talking about injustice. If justice is something right, fair, or equal, then injustice is just the opposite of that. So, when we talk about injustice, we're talking about the things in our world that are unequal, unfair, or not right.

Previously, we've talked about being aware and noticing injustice. And we've talked about experiencing injustice, as well as the need and desire to correct it. That involves choosing to get close enough to listen to and learn about it from other people. To open our eyes and begin to notice injustice around us. But when we do those things, it's important to note that it will force us to ask some deep and difficult questions.

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## TENSION

2.5 MINUTES

**Experiencing and witnessing injustice can leave us asking questions** about the injustice itself, as well as the God who is supposedly in control of the world where it happens.

Maybe you see an injustice in the world and you wonder things like . . .

- **“Why would that person say that?”**
- **“How could someone do that to someone else?”**
- **“What makes stuff like this happen?”**
- **“Why isn't anyone doing something about it?”**
- **“Why do things like this keep happening in a world where we should know better by now?”**

Or maybe you've landed on *the* difficult question when it comes to injustice . . .

***“Why isn't God doing something about this?”***

Maybe it makes you nervous that I even said that out loud because we're not supposed to question God, right? After all, God is . . . God. And God can do whatever God wants!

Or maybe you hear me say that and you're like, *“YEAH! That's exactly what I keep asking!”* You probably feel relieved that someone finally said it out loud.

Or maybe this is the very reason you're still not sure about all this Jesus and God stuff. You can't imagine yourself being a Jesus follower if He's not going to do something about the brokenness you see around you.

No matter where we are or what our world looks like right now, **God is big enough to handle our questions—even the difficult ones.** All sorts of people who have gone through all sorts of things have been trying to answer these questions since the beginning of time. So why do we keep asking?

Because it bothers us. After all, how can a good God allow things like human trafficking, prejudice, poverty, and racism to happen and do . . . nothing?

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## TRUTH

7.5 MINUTES

Thankfully, we don't have to guess or assume where God is in the midst of all of this. We don't have to guess what God is really like or if God really cares. We can look at God's Son, Jesus, Who is the best way for us to see and understand what God is really like.

Several people who knew Jesus personally and hung out with Him took the time to write down what they saw and heard Him do and say so that people like you and me, who *didn't* get to see it with their own eyes, would know what happened.

Today we're going to take a look at the eyewitness account of Matthew, in a book written by one of Jesus' closest followers and friends. We call this the book of Matthew or the "Gospel" of Matthew. His writing shows that he hung out with Jesus and knew what Jesus was about. Maybe that's why he took the time to write down this thing that he saw. Here's what he said:

***Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues, and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness (Matthew 9:35 NLT).***

While Jesus was traveling, He was teaching, healing, and helping people as He shared the message of what God's Kingdom is really like. He talked about things like . . .

- Loving outcasts.
- Freeing enslaved people.
- Rescuing the oppressed.
- Feeding the hungry.

In other words, He was talking about justice. Everywhere He went, Jesus had something to say (and do) about people being treated unfairly or in a way that wasn't right.

Matthew continued:

*When He saw the crowds, He **had compassion** on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36 NLT, emphasis added).*

Jesus felt compassion for people who were experiencing circumstances that weren't right, or fair. Compassion is the type of feeling that compels you to action. It's the feeling in the pit of your stomach when you see someone being hurt. It's the feeling that makes you want to put your arms out to cushion the fall of a kid who got pushed. The feeling that makes you wish you had a dollar to spare when you see someone suffering from lack of food or resources. That's compassion.

Jesus modeled for us what God is really like when it comes to injustice.

- First, **Jesus saw**. He saw the injustice, the hurt, and the brokenness.
- And when He saw, **Jesus cared**.

- And when Jesus' heart was moved to care, then Jesus moved into **action**. That's what compassion is.

So, if you've ever wondered what God's stance is, God is **FOR** justice. In fact, thousands of years earlier, God said so through the prophet Isaiah:

***“For I, the Lord, love justice” (Isaiah 61:8a NLT).***

So, we know that God loves justice. God loves when wrongs are righted and when what's unfair is made fair. God loves for good to conquer evil. God is good. And God does conquer evil.

**Because God is always good, God is always pursuing justice.**

But that still doesn't answer these questions . . .

“How does God pursue justice?”

“Why doesn't God *DO* something about the injustices around us today?”

“Why doesn't God just wave a magic wand or do that whole miracle thing God is so good at?”

Interestingly enough, Matthew gave us a clue in the next verse. Look at what Jesus said:

***He said to his disciples, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” (Matthew 9:37 NLT)***

Okay, so maybe you don't talk about harvesting a lot, but here, Jesus was talking about work that needs to be done. He lived in a farming community, so when He talked about planting and harvesting, it wasn't weird; It helped people understand Him better. The kind of work Jesus spoke of required a lot of effort. So when He saw some of the injustices people were dealing with, Jesus had compassion. And He responded to that compassion by telling others it's time to get to *WORK*. He basically said, “There's plenty to be done, but there's also plenty of room for more people to get involved in the work.”

Now, let me make this really personal for us: ***What if God has a plan to do something about injustice? And what if we are the plan?*** What if the miracle Jesus had in mind isn't making injustice magically go away, but instead, it's you and me doing the work to end injustice on His behalf? What if it's us responding to all the things He already cares about? What if the plan is *us* becoming more like *Jesus*?

I think it's possible. Here's why:

The Apostle Paul, whose life was changed by Jesus, wrote letters to the early churches, and taught them what it looks like to be a Christian.

He used this word picture to describe the Church:

***All of you together are Christ's body, and each of you is a part of it (1 Corinthians 12:27 NLT).***

Paul used the illustration of one body made up of all its individual parts. Even though it may seem like the ear is independent from the toe, the whole body relies on each part in order to function as God designed it to. In the same way, God designed the body of Christ, or the Church, to work together to help each other

out. So, when we talk about injustice, it's not that God isn't there or doesn't care. Instead, the Church—God's people—are called to be God's hands and feet here on Earth.

**Because God is always good, God is always pursuing justice.**

God *pursues* racial justice *through us*.

God *pursues non-violence* toward women with a plan, and that plan is *us*.

God *pursues justice* for issues like sex trafficking, hunger, poverty, modern-day slavery, and all of the injustices we see on local and global levels, through us.

We get to be a part of God pursuing the restoration of goodness over all the bad things we see people dealing with in our world.

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## APPLICATION

3.5 MINUTES

The question is: “Will you participate in what God is already doing?”

If so, where do we start? Here are a few steps you can take to begin.

- 1. Rethink what it means to be a follower of Jesus.** In other words, we can change our minds about the way we see God, the world, and even ourselves when it comes to injustice. Maybe you thought faith was about singing songs and showing up at church and praying. Those are good things, but following Jesus is so much bigger than that. Following means you start to see the world like He sees it. You care about what He cares about. You treat people the way He would treat them. Following means you sign up to be a part of the solution—a part of the plan!
- 2. Ask, “Where am I?”** Often, we tend to see injustice and ask, “Where is God in this mess?” But we have a responsibility as Jesus followers to examine how each of us is pursuing justice. It's important to choose to be part of what God is already doing in the world; To ask God to show you where your place might be in working toward justice in your community, your school, or in the world as a whole.
- 3. Find a way to fight injustice.** Look around and determine what is breaking your heart. Discover who is working to fight injustice in that area and figure out how you can partner with them. Step up, serve, give your time, give your energy, and give your money. Take the skills, personality, and resources God has given you and find ways to use them to help bring justice to the injustices God has shown you.

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## LANDING

1 MINUTE

Over and over, the authors of Scripture teach us that God cares deeply about injustice and wants to use us to do something about it. This means that God's people should be known for being people who pursue justice, just like God. Just imagine what the world could look like if we became known as a group of people



who are the most compassionate, just, kind, humble, and resilient! Imagine if we were the first to speak up and stand up for others . . . no matter what!

Imagine the positive impact we, as a collective group, could have on our community, schools, and in the lives of people we care about. We have so many opportunities to show people that God is FOR them and FOR the pursuit of justice.

When you head to groups, think about what it would take for your group to have an impact like that.

How might that impact change the lives of people experiencing injustice? How might that impact change the way people see God?



## TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS

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