



COMMUNICATOR GUIDE

And It Was Good / Week 4

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

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:15-17 NIV).

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people (Galatians 6:9-10a NIV).

NOTES FOR THIS WEEK

THINK ABOUT THIS

Be mindful of the words you choose as you talk about the continued work of justice in the world. While we don't want students to see it as a one-time thing—one post to social media, one donation to a charity, one conversation to learn about it, one service opportunity to help—we also don't want to make those just starting out feel as though their efforts aren't good enough. Be sure to applaud any efforts your students share they've made so far toward justice and encourage them to think beyond that first step to the next steps they can take and keep taking after that. Do your best to both acknowledge how big and daunting the work can feel, but also how purposeful and inspiring it can be to join in it with God and others. Remind students that joining the good work of justice is a choice. God is already working toward it whether we decide to join in or not. Challenge your students to have the courage to get into the work alongside God and others to see more good come to life in their world.

NOTE TO THE COMMUNICATOR

This week we focus on the words of James, the brother of Jesus. James' words should mean something significant to us, mainly because James did not believe his brother was the Son of God while Jesus was

alive. After Jesus died and was raised back to life, everything changed for James. James became the leader of the first century church in Jerusalem. And he developed a nickname that holds weight for this series: James was called *James the Just*. In Galatians 2, Paul described James as a pillar of the church and a man of high reputation. He also recorded that the one thing James asked of Paul when Paul started his ministry was that he would **serve the poor**. This is a great emphasis to make when considering how we all can change for good to do good in the world.

TEACHING OUTLINE

INTRODUCTION

- Each of us has different things we are passionate about.
- There are things that we will talk on and on about or rewatch, redo, or revisit.
- But there are also things that we as a society seem to be getting increasingly dispassionate about.
- There are overwhelming atrocities that we become desensitized to because it just seems like one bad thing keeps happening after another.
- Someone else was kidnapped, another person was abused, more people were injured in a mass tragedy.
- It can feel so overwhelming that we just disengage and try not to think about it out of self-preservation.

TENSION

- When you hear people talk about justice, it simply means something that is right, fair, or equal.
- Injustice is the opposite of that. When we talk about injustice, we're talking about the things in our world that are unfair, unequal, or not right.
- There are plenty of injustices in our world.
- There's a need for more people to do good things. *You* are someone who can do something.
- Maybe you hear that phrase and feel excited, challenged, or even inspired. You're ready to jump in and do the work. The work, though, isn't easy. It's not a one-and-done battle.
- Maybe you still feel like you don't know what to do because you realize that it's emotionally, mentally, and even spiritually exhausting to deal with and fight against the long list of injustices happening in our world.
- As much as we talk and pray about injustice, the reality for you may be that it truly feels like one of those problems we just can't solve.
- It feels like something **SOMEBODY** needs to do something about it, right? Well, **YOU** are that somebody.

TRUTH

- We're going to look at some words from a guy named James, the brother of Jesus.
- James wrote a letter to a group of Christians who were facing severe injustice, and he challenged them (*James 2:15-16 NIV*).
- When faced with a huge problem that we don't know how to solve, we often just settle for saying (or posting) something and doing nothing.
- Of course, thinking about it is good. Praying is powerful. Posting is important. But if our "doing something good" stops there, we've missed some of what it means to follow Jesus.
- Following somebody means you do the kind of thing they would do. And Jesus? Jesus was always doing something good about injustice.
- Did Jesus offer His words? Absolutely! But He also offered His actions (*James 2:17 NIV*).
- James said that our faith and our actions are connected.
- When it came to injustice, Jesus was always doing something good. **ALWAYS**.
- God wants to see the wrongs in the world made right. God wants us to never stop doing good when it comes to injustice.

- **BOTTOM LINE: Because good enough is never good enough, justice never stops.**
- It may feel overwhelming, but small changes are still that: Changes!
- Now, some of you get this because you have been **DOING** something about injustice for a long time. And you know it's exhausting and may sometimes feel like it's not working.
- I want you to hear from somebody else who met Jesus, who hung out with His followers (including James), and who spoke to people facing huge injustice (*Galatians 6:9-10a NIV*).
- Fighting injustice is like planting a seed. You plant it. You water it. You give it sunlight and time to grow. And then, you keep doing that until something blooms.
- There are people who have been fighting to right the wrongs in this world for decades and decades. And little by little, they've seen change and made progress.
- The same can be true for us. When it comes to injustice, never stop doing something.

APPLICATION

- Here are ways to keep doing something about injustice:
 - Use your voice.
 - Use your influence.
 - Use your talent.
 - Use your life.

LANDING

- Maybe before this, you never thought God cared about injustice. For some of us, this idea has even changed the way we think about God altogether.
- Today, as we're wrapping up this series, imagine this: What if the Church actually did this?
- That **CAN** happen, but only if we **DO SOMETHING**.

INTERACTIVE

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

What You'll Need

- A small bag of seeds.
- A handful of dirt.
- A potted plant.
- A small pail of water.

TEACHING SLIDES

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



TEACHING SCRIPT

And It Was Good / Week 4

BOTTOM LINE

BECAUSE GOOD ENOUGH IS NEVER GOOD ENOUGH, JUSTICE NEVER STOPS.

INTRODUCTION

3 MINUTES

Each one of us has different things we're passionate about. Maybe you're passionate about music, cheer, gaming, or pickleball. (Okay that might be one your grandma is passionate about.) No matter our interests, there are things that we will talk on and on about or rewatch, redo, or revisit.

But there are also things that we as a society seem to be getting increasingly dispassionate about. There are overwhelming atrocities that we become desensitized to because it just seems like one bad thing keeps happening after another. Someone else was kidnapped. Another person was abused. More people were injured in a mass tragedy.

For the past few weeks, we've been talking about injustice. We know events and experiences like those aren't fair or just. And in theory, we wish somebody, somewhere would shift those situations from bad to good. But when we begin to think of all the injustice in the world, or even just all the injustice we've been talking about, it can feel really overwhelming. So we just disengage and try not to think about it out of self-preservation.

Questions like: "What should I do?" or "What can I do?" can become too much to think about. After all, what is something that will *actually* make a difference when it comes to injustice?

TENSION

5.5 MINUTES

Just to make sure we're all on the same page, let's define that word "injustice," once more.

When you hear people talk about justice, it simply means something that is right, fair, or equal. Well, injustice is the opposite of that. When we talk about injustice, we're talking about the things in our world that are unfair, unequal, or not right.

People getting bullied at school? That's injustice. Victims of human trafficking? That's injustice. Families in poverty? That's injustice. Students not having the tools, or resources, or internet access they need to keep up with classes? That's injustice. Kids not having meals on days with no school breakfast or lunch? Injustice. Women not being paid the same as men for the same job? Injustice. People being treated differently and being discriminated against? That's injustice. The list goes on and on.

When you think about it this way, chances are you can see plenty of areas of injustice in our world. And if you're honest, that probably makes you think something like, "Wow, there are a lot of terrible things happening in the world. Somebody should really do something about all that!"

And so far, we all agree. We all get that. There's a need for more somebodies to do some things. Check! But I want you to pay attention to what I say next because it's the whole point of this series. It could be a phrase that passes right through your mind having no effect, or it could change the course of your life. So, here we go:

You are somebody who *could* do something.

You have the ability to do good in a world filled with lots and lots of bad. And maybe you *have* done something. Maybe you've brought some good in spite of some really bad situations, but then the realization hits that it's not just a one-and-done battle. So many people, including some of you and some of your leaders, have spent years fighting against things like racism, poverty, prejudice, and gender inequality. You know that this work isn't easy or fast and that everyone who is ready to do something has to be ready for the long haul.

But you could also feel overwhelmed and apathetic because you realize that it's emotionally, mentally, and even spiritually exhausting to deal with and fight against the long list of injustices happening in our world. As much as we talk, and pray about, and do something about injustice, the reality is that to you, it truly feels like a problem that just can't be solved.

- Maybe you're thinking that injustice has always happened and it's *still* happening, so is there really hope of changing it?
- Maybe you're wondering how you, just one person, can make a difference in some huge problems like racism, human trafficking, sexism, poverty, and more. Is it even possible for *one teenager* to make a difference in any meaningful way?
- Maybe you're SO tired of talking about it and trying to explain to people who don't seem to care that you wonder if it's even worth trying anymore. Will people ever care as much as you do?
- Or maybe you've experienced injustice for so long that you wonder if saying anything or doing anything is really going to make a difference. It hasn't so far, so why would it now?
- Is there any way all of this bad can become something good?

Believe me, I totally get all of that. Because you're right: Standing up and doing something about injustice isn't easy. It *is* overwhelming. It *is* something that feels like somebody bigger, or stronger, or older, or more powerful should be doing. It feels like *somebody* somewhere needs to do some good, right?

Well, remember what we said: **You could be that *somebody*.**

TRUTH

9.5 MINUTES

To get started, we're going to look at some words from a guy named James. What's interesting about James is that he was actually the brother of Jesus.

Can you imagine growing up in the same family as Jesus? Of course, it couldn't have helped that Jesus is literally God in human form. For those of you who have siblings, you can probably feel for James!

What's interesting is that after Jesus died and was raised back to life, James got more involved in the ministry his Brother was all about. James went from being mostly absent from Jesus' ministry to being the

guy traveling the world and telling others about his Brother. What changed? Well, my guess is when your Brother dies and comes back to life, it makes sense to believe that He is who He says He is. James believed that his Brother, Jesus, was actually the Son of God. This is one of the reasons we know the resurrection actually happened: Jesus' own brother believed He died and came back to life. And James wrote down the experiences he had after watching all of that happen.

James went on to write a letter to a group of Christians who were facing severe injustice, and he challenged them by saying this:

Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? (James 2:15-16 NIV)

When you put it that way, it sounds pretty heartless. But you know what? If we're honest, I think that's what we're all tempted to do sometimes. When faced with the HUGE-ness of a problem that we don't know how to solve, **we often just settle for saying (or posting) something and doing nothing.**

- When we see something unjust happening in our town, we think about how bad it is. We may even say so, but sometimes that's where our involvement ends.
- When we see someone we know struggling to have their needs met, we might say we'll pray for them, and we probably do. But of course, we don't want to “get in their business,” so it stops there. We don't do much else.
- When we see racial injustice happening in our country, we might post about it on our social media feeds, but then we move on. So many of us don't do the harder work of learning about it, speaking up about it, or standing up to it when we see it happening.

This, by the way, isn't a generational thing. This is a human thing. Every adult in this room feels the temptation to hold back when it comes to injustice. And don't get me wrong here: Thinking about it is good. Praying is powerful. Posting is important. All of that is good, but if our “doing some good” stops there, we have missed some of what it means to follow Jesus.

You see, following somebody means you do the kind of thing they would do. And Jesus? **Jesus was always doing some good in the face of the injustice that took place around Him.**

Maybe you've heard about how Jesus spoke up for the poor, cared for the sick, hung out with people who were outcasts, and confronted leaders who were treating people unfairly. Did Jesus offer His words? Absolutely! But He also offered his actions. He lived in a way that showed the world what it looks like to value people. And as His followers, we can do the same.

Look at what James went on to say:

In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead (James 2:17 NIV).

James was saying that our faith and our actions are connected. **If we say we have faith, but it doesn't motivate us to do something, then something about our faith is broken, incomplete, or lacking.** And here's why that's a big deal: Living a life of faith is about becoming more like Jesus. And even if you've missed every part of this series so far, here's the part I want you to always remember: When it came to injustice, Jesus was always doing some good. *Always.* When we make that shift to allow our prayers and words to turn into action, we are becoming more like who we're praying to. We're becoming more like Jesus.

The things that make you feel sad or angry that you know aren't right . . .

The injustices that motivate you to act . . .

Those things that hurt you and the people you love . . .

Those are all wrongs in the world that God wants to see made right. They are the bad we're called to shift into good. And not just tossing in some good here and sprinkling some good over there so you can look back and say, "Eh, that's good enough." We are called to more.

Because good enough is never good enough, justice never stops.

There's no line on a measuring cup that will tell us that the good we're doing is now good enough. There's not a finish line to doing good. When it comes to justice, it's an ongoing effort—a lifelong commitment.

It may feel overwhelming—like our little actions won't have any impact on such giant problems. But small changes are still changes! And they're *good* changes in the *right* direction.

Now, some of you get this because you have been DOING some good things about the problems of injustice for a long time. You've *been* speaking up for people, showing up to help, posting, and working. And because of that, here's what you know for sure:

1. It is exhausting. Doing something means you have the same conversations over and over. It means you don't show up one time, check the box, and move on. You show up over, and over, and over.
2. It may feel like it's not working. You may feel like you're fighting a losing battle; that every little thing you're doing just isn't working or adding up. You probably feel discouraged at times, wondering if this battle is even one that can be won.

Well, if that's you, I want you to hear from somebody else who met Jesus, who hung out with His followers (including James), and who spoke to people facing huge injustice. He's the apostle Paul, and here's what he said:

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people (Galatians 6:9-10a NIV).

"Don't get weary when you're doing good," Paul said. In other words, don't give up! Don't give in when the good work gets hard. Instead, keep going, keep working, and keep fighting. And Paul would know! If you took a deep dive into his story, you'd see that he used to be one of the most prejudiced and unjust people around. But after he encountered Jesus, Paul turned his whole life around and committed to doing good.

INTERACTIVE

Media Package subscribers:

Look for [AndItWasGood_MediaPackage_Week4_SeedsAndHarvest_XP3HS](#) to accompany this Interactive. Interested in purchasing the annual media package? Look for the Media Package Add-On in your curriculum dashboard.

For this Interactive, you'll use plants and gardening tools to illustrate how fighting against injustice is like planting a seed, taking care of it, and allowing it to grow over time.

Say something like this: "Fighting injustice is like planting a seed [show the bag of seeds]. You plant it [show the handful of dirt]. You water it [show the gardening pail]. You give it sunlight and time to grow. You have to take care of it [show the gardening shears]. And then, you keep doing that until something blooms."

"You won't see much at the beginning. And you may even think that a plant won't ever sprout. But underground, a lot is happening. Eventually, the plant will pop up, and before long it will be harvest time."

See, the work you're doing and the injustices in the world that break your heart? They aren't new. And that means the battle between doing some good and injustice isn't new either. There are people who have been fighting to right wrongs and do good in this world for decades and centuries. And little by little, there's been change. There's been progress. And I'm so grateful those people did not give up. They didn't "become weary in doing good."

The same can be true for us. When it comes to injustice, never stop doing something good. It may feel impossible, but little by little you can change the world. How? Like James said, do something good. And like Paul said, "KEEP doing something good."

Because good enough is never good enough, justice never stops.

APPLICATION

3 MINUTES

So, here are ways to keep doing something good about injustice:

- **Use your voice.** Speak up. Say something in the moment. Say something on social media. Say something to a teacher or adult who can help. Use the voice you have to speak up and speak out for those who need it. And if that doesn't work? KEEP saying something until it does.
- **Use your influence.** Maybe people listen to you because they're in your friend group. Use that influence to talk about injustice with them. Maybe your family has resources that could help other people. Ask how you can use those. Maybe your family has connections or a lot of opportunities. Ask how you can use YOUR opportunities to help someone else get more opportunities.
- **Use your talent.** You don't have to give up on basketball, or theater, or Spanish class, or whatever your hobby is. Use the talent God has given you to do some good for others. Lean into what you're good at to do some good! Maybe you use your art to do something about injustice you see in your school. Maybe you can use the fact that you're on a sports team to get your whole team to speak up for or serve others. Maybe you can use the opportunity you have as a school tutor to help kids who need it. If you aren't sure how to start or what you have to offer, ask God. Ask God to show you. Then, ask your small group leader. They can tell you not only what talents they see in you, but help you brainstorm ways you can put them to work for the sake of others.
- **Use your life.** We're not talking about just one service project or signing up to volunteer a few times. Injustice is everywhere, and part of following Jesus is making a commitment to DO good and KEEP DOING GOOD. It's making a lifelong commitment to do the work. Of course, that means you have to take care of yourself in the process. You may need to find some people who can encourage you—who can remind you that doing something is worth it even when it doesn't feel like it.

LANDING

1 MINUTE

In the beginning, God created this world we live in and said that it was good. This world does not always live up to the goodness of when God first created it. But each of us is also part of God's good Creation,

which means we have the ability to infuse good back into the world when injustice creeps in and taints things.

Maybe before this, you never thought God cared about injustice. For some of us, this idea has even changed the way we think about God altogether. Goodness flowed from God when God created Earth, and it was good. Goodness flowed from God when God created humans, and God called us good. Injustice is a big, bad issue that can feel impossible to overcome, but we are called to do more than just, “good enough.” Before you head to small groups, pause with me for a minute.

Today, as we’re wrapping up this series, I want you to imagine this: What if the Church *actually* lived this out? Not just our church, but THE Church; The entire community of people who follow Jesus. How might the people in your school or your neighborhood see God differently if Christians were known for choosing to see people the way God sees them and treat them as God would? It’s not impossible. When you begin to think and imagine that kind of future, it’s actually filled *with* possibility.

Here’s what’s wild: This CAN happen . . . but only if we do some GOOD.



TRANSITION INTO SMALL GROUPS
