

Thirsting for Justice: Biblical Perspectives

L.A. Religious Education Congress 2019

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“What does the LORD require of you
but to do justice (מִשְׁפָּט, *mishpat*),
and to love kindness (חֶסֶד, *hesed*, “mercy”)
and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:8)

Biblical Justice: *RIGHT RELATION* with God, Self, Others, all Creation

I. Right Relation with God

- a. Letting Ourselves be chosen and “mercy’d” (see Matt 9:9-13)
- b. God’s Mercy and Divine Justice - not two contradictory realities, but two dimensions of a single reality.

c. God’s Many Names and Images

The Holy One is revealed to us in myriad relationship patterns:

- “my rock, my fortress,” (Deut 32:15)
- devouring fire (Deut 4:24)
- lion (Hos 5:14)
- a mother bird sheltering her chicks (Ps 91:4)
- “I am who I am as who I am will I be with you” (Exod 3:14)
- shepherd who leads us to peaceful pastures (Psalm 23)
- shepherd who searches for a lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7)
- shepherd who calls the sheep by name (John 10)
- warrior or king who defends his people (Pss 5:2; 78:65)
- father who protects and provides for his children
- a mother giving birth (Deut 32:18; Isa 42:14)
- mother who tenderly consoles her child (Isa 49:15; 66:13)
- midwife (Isa 66:9; Ps 22:10-11)
- woman who searches for a lost coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- woman who hides yeast in bread dough (Luke 13:33)
- widow who demands justice (Luke 18:1-8)
- Woman Wisdom incarnate, who seeks out the simple (Prov 1:20-23; 8:1-5) and invites all to her banquet (Prov 9:1-11)
- God is mercy: the Hebrew word for mercy, compassion, *rachamim*, is derived from *rechem*, “womb.”

II. Right Relation with Self, Others, and all Creation

- a. Made in God's Image; we are not God (Gen 1-2)
- b. Communion with All People and All Creation
 - i. Resisting anthropocentrism
 - ii. Care for our common home (Gen 1:28)
 - iii. Connectedness in a Digital Age
 - iv. Building Bridges (John 4:4-42)
 - v. Mercying & Letting ourselves be Mercy'd by the Other (Luke 10:25-37)
 - vi. Economic Justice (Matt 20:1-16): Making "them" equal to "us" vs. getting what we deserve
 - vii. Justice in the face of aggression (Matt 5:38-48)
 - viii. Forgiveness and justice (Matt 18:21-35)
 - ix. Persistence in the pursuit of justice (Luke 18:1-8)

III. Thirsting for Justice

- A. Contemplating;
- B. Sharing the fruits of our contemplation;
- C. Studying and resisting easy answers;
- D. Fostering communion among ourselves and with all creation;
- E. Building bridges across boundaries of difference; seeking to truly hear and know others, especially those whose views differ from our own;
- F. Opening ourselves to be changed.

For Further Study:

Reid, Barbara E. *Parables for Preachers*. 3 vols. Liturgical Press, 1999, 2000, 2001.

Spanish translation of Year A, B: *Las parabras: predicándolas y viviéndolas*.

Liturgical Press, 2007, 2008.

Reid, Barbara E. *Wisdom's Feast. An Invitation to Feminist Interpretation of the Scriptures*.

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Press, 2016.

Spanish translation coming soon from Editorial Verbo Divino.

Wisdom Commentary Series (Barbara E. Reid, General Editor):

16 vols. available at Liturgical Press; 42 more volumes in process.

See: www.wisdomcommentary.org

See Summer Institute Courses, Biblical Lands Study and Travel Programs, and other resources at **Catholic Theological Union**: www.ctu.edu