

Social Justice & the Kingdom

Social Justice is the throbbing heartbeat of many Christians as it is for a vast number of non-believers. So, as it's seen as so important today, what are our responsibilities towards it in the Kingdom?

As one person discovered, looking back at their Christian life with new Kingdom 'glasses':

*"When I received Jesus, I rejoiced that I was forgiven of all my sins. I was told that my personal life didn't matter much to God because He loves me despite what I do. I'm under grace, and God is primarily interested in justice and helping the poor. For years, my life was focused on raising my children, sending them to college when they grow up, and someday having grandchildren. I went to church once a week, read my Bible, and prayed. I was hungry for justice in the world and supported several causes that promoted it. Looking back, I discovered that Jesus was really just a supplement to my already busy life. Christ wasn't the reason why I breathed. I was living for other things, even good things like raising a family and working for justice, but they weren't my Lord Jesus."*¹

Here are 2 interesting points of view about social justice. This one is about social justice warriors:

"Some of the greatest lessons I learned in actual social justice came from my parents, even if they didn't use the term 'social justice'. They showed me that one way to make the world more just is simply by taking responsibility for oneself and one's family, so that limited community resources can go to those who are most in need. They taught me to treat people as individuals who share a common humanity, a strategy that has been backed by research examining how to reduce prejudice and promote intergroup harmony. They fostered a mentality of dignity and resilience, never letting us wallow in self-pity. I could go on.

My family lived in a part of the world plagued by mass poverty and disease. Here in the United States, I have seen up close the people in our communities who are truly suffering or unable to provide for themselves. And I realize that despite the fact that the Western world is becoming increasingly open-minded and tolerant, we are still sadly cursed with bigotry and hate. But I also know how to tell the difference between those working for a cause and those making a cause work for them. Beware of the false prophets of social justice.

*Whether we call it social justice, God's work, or something else, there are people on the left, right, and everywhere in-between working hard to study and solve the ills that infect our society, elevate humanity, fight injustice, and help those in need. These individuals often receive little or no public recognition. But there are also many who may be in the spotlight but, whether they realize it or not, are, at best, just in the way. Whether we are talking about traditional religions or their new secular substitutes, if you want to find the people who are making our world a more just place, don't look in the spotlight. Look in the shadows."*²

And, from more of a Kingdom perspective:

"Recently, one of my email subscribers unsubscribed from my blog, a blog where I glorify Christ and discuss the implications of living by His life. When I asked her why she unsubscribed, her answer was, "I'm into social justice. I'm hungry for justice and that's my passion". This person is an example of those who have made the kingdom of God the equivalent of social justice, wherein Jesus Christ has gotten short-changed in the process.

It's actually idolatrous to make "social justice" one's passion above the Lord Jesus himself. It's idolatrous because our allegiance has shifted from Christ to serving the world. Tragically, there are countless Christians today who are more interested in making the world a better place than they are in knowing and living by Christ, who is the very incarnation of God's Kingdom. While engaging in humanitarian efforts is good and noble, such efforts are being done in spades by wealthy entrepreneurs and philanthropic celebrities, many of whom are atheists and agnostics. These efforts

1 – Frank Viola (2018) "Insurgence" p:12

2 – Clay Routledge (14-9-2018) "Social Justice in the Shadows" quillette.com/2018/09/14/social-justice-in-the-shadows

are not exclusive to Christians (though it can be argued that philanthropy in the West was originally influenced by Christianity).

Humanitarian efforts alone cannot be rightly called 'Kingdom work'. Not in any biblical sense, anyway. 'Kingdom work' is only done when those engaged in the labor have surrendered to Jesus as King. If that hasn't happened, it can be called 'good' work, 'noble' work, 'humanitarian' work, but not 'Kingdom' work. Kingdom work proclaims, embodies, or demonstrates the sovereign kingship of Jesus Christ. To put it bluntly, you cannot make something that's worldly spiritual by slapping the word 'Kingdom' on it...

Here's the harsh reality. Serving the world can actually become another brand of worldliness. The 'social gospel' – which focuses on fixing the problems of the world – began over a century ago. But it has failed to solve the problems of wickedness, corruption, violence, and oppression. Yet more tragically, the social gospel has emptied the gospel of the Kingdom of its spiritual power...

The truth is, we cannot do Kingdom work without worshiping the King. And we cannot do Kingdom work apart from living by the King's life. And both of those elements are based on the cross of Jesus Christ.”³

Good works that have Kingdom value must come from one's Internal Kingdom⁴ where the King is king and where an intimate relationship with him causes us to do what he wants us to do, not what we think is good.

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3 – Frank Viola (2018) “Insurgence” p:303-304

4 – See “Understanding the Internal Kingdom”

(canberraforerunners.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Understanding-the-Internal-Kingdom.pdf)