

Exposing Enemies Within the Church: A 7-Session Bible Study Series
Session 6: Social Justice: A Counterfeit Gospel: Part 1
Group Discussion Guides

Group 1: We Haven't Even Begun to Realize What Oppression Is

Jesus: The One Oppressed

Crucifixion

When we consider what Christ went through for us, our minds immediately drift to the horrors He suffered physically. God's only Son was beaten by Roman soldiers who were part of the premier military force of that day. He was scourged with a whip that cut deeply into the muscles of his back and the tissues underneath, leaving his back raw, bloody, and severely mangled. He was mocked by those He came to save and was spat upon. Yet He prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

Crucifixion suffocated its victims. The weight of the victim as he hung on his cross put pressure on his chest, preventing him from breathing. To breathe, the condemned man who was being executed had to push himself up on his cross, an

action that caused devastating pain. Of course, the nails that pierced Jesus' wrists and feet when He was secured to the cross also tore into His flesh, and even more so with every breath He struggled to take. With each up or down motion, the rough, splintered wood behind Jesus' back scraped mercilessly against His already-wounded and bleeding flesh.

The Romans had "perfected" crucifixion, making it the most horrific death possible. Truly, Isaiah 53:7 alludes to this when it says, "He was *oppressed* and He was *afflicted*" (emphasis added). Isaiah continued, "Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth."

Discuss the following ideas.

1. Consider the "oppression" members of groups critical theorists say are "oppressed" actually have to face. Where real oppression exists, we should oppose it; but social justice warriors don't seem to mind saying oppression exists where none does. Keep in mind that homosexuality in our society is widely celebrated, and that racism and sexism are universally condemned.
2. Of course, sometimes people — individuals — are indeed oppressed, and mistreatment of one's fellow human beings always is wrong and calls for oppressors to be held accountable. However, a strong case can be made that merely holding the view that homosexuality is morally wrong isn't actually oppression; it's just holding a view on a moral issue that differs from society's. Yet the social justice narrative assumes that a failure to affirm homosexuality constitutes oppression. Explain why this is faulty thinking.
3. While genuine oppression still can occur, the trend is for homosexuals, blacks, and women to have far more tolerable circumstances than social justice crusaders claim. Contrast their "oppression" to the physical abuse Jesus endured, especially when He was crucified. Who are the people responsible for that abuse?

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Group 2: We Haven't Even Begun to Realize What Being Guilty of Oppression Means

We — All of Us — Oppressed Jesus by Sending Him to the Cross, Even Though We Weren't There

Christ was oppressed physically on the cross, but He also was oppressed spiritually when God the Father “laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Isa. 53:6) and thereby “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Cor. 5:21). As God in the flesh, Christ was perfect and holy. He was without sin, so He could die to pay for sinners’ offenses against a holy and righteous God.

You see, when we sin, we are violating God’s holy character. We are not making a mistake, we are not simply breaking arbitrary rules, and we are not merely making Jesus sad. Let me say it again. *When we sin, we are violating God’s holy character. How so? When we sin, we are breaking God’s law, and His law is a reflection of His character.*

Because Christ spiritually took upon Himself God’s punishment for our sin, when we trust Him for salvation, God takes the wrath He directed against His sinless Son and credits His Son’s payment of sin to our accounts. Jesus can pay for our sins because He Himself was and is sinless! This secures eternal salvation for us! In this way God the Father answers His Son’s prayer, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do” (Luke 23:34). We didn’t know *then*, but we need to know and acknowledge our guilt *now*.

Here’s an important warning. Don’t for a New York minute miss this inescapable truth: This is the way of salvation for sinners — and it is God’s way

and the only possible way (see John 14:6; 1 Tim. 2:5-6). Therefore, all human beings, without any possible objection or debate, are the spiritual oppressors in the narrative of the biblical gospel — and *this* narrative is 100 percent correct.

Let it sink in! We are talking about *us!* *We are guilty!* *We have blood on our hands* — and not just collectively, but individually as well.

What is seemingly missing in the social justice “gospel” is a biblical understanding of hamartiology — the study of sin. Those who are mouthpieces of the social justice movement may in fact cite the same verses that throughout church history preachers and other theologians have cited when they’ve taught about sin — verses like Psalm 14:2-3, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Isaiah 64:6-7, Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:23, and Romans 6:23 (see <https://bit.ly/3GbbPh9>). Even if they do, the prevailing narrative of the movement clouds and twists the truth about sin, if for no other reason than it fails to present Jesus as the only one oppressed and everyone else as oppressors. When we understand sin, we also understand the necessity of the cross. We cannot avoid the conclusion that every person, no matter what his or her circumstances may be, has offended and oppressed God (and His Son). Everyone deserves hell and is in desperate need of the forgiveness that Jesus has made possible by dying on the cross.

Discuss the following ideas.

1. Describe the differences between what the social justice narrative means when it speaks of oppression and the biblical gospel’s perspective on oppression.
2. Do you see that the social justice “gospel” keeps those it has deemed to be oppressed in perpetual victimhood? Do you see that it offers those it has deemed to be oppressors no forgiveness, but instead demands that they continually bow to the “moral authority” of the oppressed? According to the social justice movement, the primary characteristic of those considered to be oppressors is white skin, which, from the social justice perspective, is tied to an ideology called “whiteness.” Whiteness, of course, is *by definition* oppressive. Describe how the teachings of biblical gospel differ from those of the social justice narrative on victimhood, resentment, and forgiveness.
3. Why can it be said that only the biblical gospel offers humanity hope of racial reconciliation? (see Col. 3:8-17). We will discuss this in greater detail next time, in our final session.

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Group 3: We Haven't Even Begun to Realize What Justice Is

A Matter of Justice

God would be absolutely just if He sent all of us to hell immediately; yet social justice crusaders teach that there are classes of people who are owed something. Whether the "solution" recommended is racial reparations, promoting the "rights" of LGBTQ individuals, or the partiality shown to those who have several marks on their intersectionality profiles; social justice warriors teach that certain specific categories of people are victims. Because they either are or have been deemed oppressed, the social justice "gospel" claims they deserve special treatment that supposedly will right past and present wrongs performed against them.

Others, say social justice advocates, are oppressors by virtue of their "privileged" status. These groups and the individuals that belong to them must be punished for their "oppression." Reality, however, refutes a great many assumptions made by the social justice crowd.

Here's an example. Can whites be racists? Yes, of course — but if they are racists, they aren't racists merely because they are white. Don't you

know white people who aren't racists? When social justice crusaders lump all white people in one group and say they are racists *merely because they are white*, they commit an act of racism that is every bit as egregious as the offenses they claim to be opposing.

You may be reading this and wondering, *Isn't it true that many people have been wronged?* Yes, some people have been wronged and have been oppressed in life, but this should be addressed on an individual basis and not in class warfare, an arena that exacerbates rather than resolves problems.

When people are individually wronged, they should be protected and vindicated by laws that align with biblical teachings.

Further, when we look at those who have been oppressed, it is vital we understand that they — like every other human being — have oppressed Christ infinitely more than they have been victimized. The ones deemed to be oppressors, of course, also are guilty of oppressing Christ.

Discuss the following ideas.

Remember from Session 1 that in his excellent booklet on social justice, Dr. Calvin Beisner makes the case that *we uphold biblical justice when we render "impartially and proportionally to everyone his due in accord with the righteous standard of God's moral law."*

In a PragerU video on social justice titled "Social Justice Isn't Justice," Allie Beth Stuckey tells us the unvarnished truth about social justice, and she does so by contrasting it to true justice. She says, "Justice is getting what you deserve without favor. Social justice is getting what you don't deserve because you *are* favored."

1. Explain why it would be entirely just if God were to condemn everyone to hell.
2. Explain why neither the social justice movement nor its advocates are impartial, and why, because they aren't impartial, their cause *can't* be true justice.
3. Keeping in mind that (1) being shown mercy means you *haven't* gotten bad things you *do* deserve and that (2) being shown grace means you *have* received blessings you *don't* deserve, explain why we can say with confidence that the biblical gospel is good news. *It offers sinners mercy and grace and withholds justice!* Jesus took what we *do* deserve (punishment for sins) upon Himself and gives those who rely on Him for salvation what they *don't* deserve (forgiveness and a right relationship with Him).
4. Explain why we can say that the social justice "gospel" really isn't good news. *Its goal is to perpetually divide groups and to exacerbate tensions between them. Thus, it places each group in a prison forever — the "oppressed" in a prison of perpetual victimhood and "oppressors" in a prison of perpetual guilt.* Forgiveness is the key that will unlock the prison doors. We'll discuss this in our seventh and final session.