

Justice for the Nations

by Robert B. Thompson

The sermon emphasizes the importance of the Body of Christ being prepared to work with Christ in bringing justice to the nations, and the need for each true Christian to discover and utilize their gifts and callings.

Scripture: Genesis 22:18, 2 Chronicles 7:14, Isaiah 42:1, Isaiah 42:3, Romans 6:23, Romans 12:4, Galatians 3:29, Ephesians 4:13, Hebrews 4:10, James 1:22, 1 Peter 2:9, 2 Peter 3:13

Topics: "Social Justice", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

Robert B. Thompson preaches about the importance of Christ, the Servant of the Lord, who will bring justice to the nations at His return. The sermon emphasizes that all members of the Body of Christ are called to participate in bringing justice to the world. It highlights the urgency for Christians to discover and utilize their spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ and prepare for the coming of Jesus. The sermon also stresses the need for believers to focus on unity of faith, deepening knowledge of Christ, developing His moral image, and finding rest in God.

Transcript

Introduction

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1)

Who is the servant who will bring justice to the nations? When will he do this?

Our answer is, Christ is the one who will bring justice to the nations and He will do this at His return from Heaven.

By Christ we mean the Head and Body of Christ, the one Seed of Abraham.

It has been announced from the beginning that the Seed of Abraham would bless the nations of the earth.

And through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." (Genesis 22:18)

We understand that all those who belong to the Lord Jesus are Abraham's Seed, the offspring of God whether they were Jewish or Gentile by physical birth.

If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:29)

We may not have understood as clearly that all the members of the Body of Christ are to appear with the glorified Head and bring justice to the nations of the earth.

The purpose of the appearing of Jesus Christ and His saints is to bring justice to the nations.

We probably do not have to spend much time explaining to the reader that injustice prevails in the earth. We know, for example, that numerous African children have died from starvation during the past few years. Yet last week the dairy farmers of France were fined a large amount of money because they produced too much milk.

We can go on and on about the problems of refrigeration and distribution. But the money and technology required to get milk and other food to the children of Africa is available. The problem is sin and selfishness. The rich man was sent to Hell because of selfishness.

When relief efforts have been made the goods have ended up on the black market with the money going to evil people.

Human efforts to alleviate suffering are commendable indeed, but because of the spiritual darkness the needs are as great today as any other time of history. Sin continues to prevent justice.

The Church Age

God has a solution for the problem of injustice. The solution is the coming of Jesus Christ with His saints to destroy wickedness from the earth. The Father will empower Christ to do this.

There will be no more failures or discouragement. The islands of the sea will wait with joy for the coming of the Law from Zion and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

It is difficult for us who are older to believe that salvation actually will come to the nations of the earth. But the Prophets speak clearly that it shall.

When the Lord Jesus came the first time He made an atonement for the sins of the whole world, not just the sins of the Church but of the world. That does not mean everyone will be saved into the Kingdom of God, unfortunately, but this is because some people will refuse the salvation Christ is offering.

After Christ rose from the dead it became possible for Him to be born and developed in believers. We receive Him by eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Every time we overcome the evil set before us, by calling on the Lord for help, we are given to eat of the flesh of Christ and the blood of Christ. Such is the food by which we are to live.

The result of our learning to live by Christ's body and blood is that we become an integral part of Christ, His Body. We are anointed with the Holy Spirit for the priestly work of the Kingdom.

The One whom the Father will empower to bring justice to the nations is Christ, Head and Body.

The purpose for the Church Age has been and continues to be the building of the Body of the Servant of the Lord, the one who will bring justice to the nations. All the gifts and ministries given by the ascended Christ serve to bring every member of the Body to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of

God, to maturity as measured by the full stature of Christ.

The apostle lays the foundation of doctrine.

The prophet keeps us abreast of the present will and wisdom of God.

The evangelist seeks out those whom God has called to be members of the Church, the Body of Christ.

The pastors and teachers disciple the believers until they are prepared to appear with Christ and bring justice to the nations.

It is useless for God to send Christ to the earth until the Body of Christ is prepared to work with Him in the task of bringing justice to the nations.

The Urgency of Today

Since the bringing of justice to the nations waits for the preparation of the body of the Deliverer, and since the body is built up by that which every part supplies, it is urgent that the Christian churches become much more attentive to the need for developing the dormant ministries existing in the assemblies.

The Bible states that the Holy Spirit gives gifts to every member of the Body of Christ. There is no true Christian that does not have one or more gifts from the Holy Spirit.

It is the author's point of view that the members of most Christian assemblies do not know what their gifts are nor are they actively pursuing them.

During the last fifty years there have been successful attempts to follow the scriptural pattern of laying on of hands and prophesying in order to inform the believers of their gifts or to impart gifts. Prophesying by a godly presbytery has been helpful at times. But the greater part of the task of equipping the believers for their role in building the Body of Christ remains to be accomplished.

It is not enough for people to be prophesied over. They must be informed of the fact that a gift of the Spirit is not a blessing we tack on to our business as usual life. Our gift in the Body (and this includes every believer) must become the focus of our life, just as the various parts of our physical body view the service of the body as their principal task. We would be in bad shape if some part of our body began to pursue some activity other than servicing our body!

There is no way to find out what God's will is other than to present our body a living sacrifice to God. Until we do this it is highly probable we never will discover what it was we were to contribute to the body of the Deliverer.

Until we present our body a living sacrifice we are not a Christian. This may sound radical but it is true. Our definition of a Christian, in the United States of today, is not the same as the Bible definition.

Currently we are in the deep freeze of an apostasy that perhaps is without precedent in the United States. It is true there are signs of life here and there. But no real revival of godliness will take place until we turn from the grace-rapture-Heaven model of salvation to the patient, cross-carrying obedience of the believer who is entering the Kingdom of God through much tribulation.

Spiritual refreshing is not enough. We must have a return to New Testament doctrine, to the commandments of Christ and His Apostles. We have drifted far from the Scripture and are teaching the contemporary traditions. A return to an unbiased exposition of the Scriptures is a fundamental aspect of the tremendous latter-rain revival that is at hand.

Each true Christian has been given to Christ by the Father. Each true Christian is not of the world just as Christ is not of the world. Each true Christ has denied himself or herself and is carrying his cross behind the Lord Jesus.

We see, then, there are one or two true Christians in each assembling.

What are the rest of the people? I don't know.

The Christian is a saint. A saint is a holy one. The saints are not holy because they are better than other people but because they have been called of God from the foundation of the world to be holy.

To be holy is to be drawn close to God for His special purposes. Thus we are, or ought to be, a peculiar people zealous of good works.

There is an urgency today. The urgency is for the true Christians to lay aside their own life until they understand what God's will is.

After discovering God's will we are to wait on our ministry day and night.

This does not mean we quit our job. It means rather that we rearrange our priorities, our thoughts concerning what is important, and view the gift(s) we have been given as first in significance.

The meek of the earth are in agony waiting for Christ to come and bring justice. What are you doing that is more important than building the Body of Christ?

Exactly what are you doing in this world that is more important than building up the Body of the Servant of the Lord, the one who will bring an end to child prostitution, to war, to famine, to poverty, to filth and despair? Just what are you doing that is so terribly important?

Pray! Set aside time and pray! Covet the best gifts. Pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal God's will to you. It is not going to be dumped on your head. God does not want to have to wrench your programs and environment in order to get you to respond. Hold yourself in readiness--day and night.

If you do not you are facing the outer darkness because of wasting your talent.

Four Goals of the Functioning of the Gifts and Ministries of the Body of Christ

There are four goals to be accomplished if we are to grow to maturity as measured by the full stature of Christ.

The unity of the faith

The knowledge of the Son of God

The moral image of Christ

Untroubled rest in Christ in the Father

The unity of the faith. The unity of the faith has nothing to do with our belief in doctrine--that we all believe the same theology. The unity of the faith refers to our daily growth in faith in Jesus Christ. The unity of the faith is found in how we make our decisions. Do we make each decision by looking to the Lord or do we plunge ahead according to our own lusts and fancies?

Jesus Christ did nothing except what He saw the Father do. We must learn to make our decisions in the same manner. We must be perfectly responsive to the Head. Every member of the Body of Christ must learn to be perfectly responsive to the Head. When this is true, the Head, Christ, is in perfect control of each member of the Body.

Until each of us is making every decision according to the will of Christ the Body is suffering from a neurologic disorder. The parts of the body are not in perfect harmony with the brain.

The knowledge of the Son of God. We know a little of Christ when we are first saved. But as we follow Him closely each day He expands in our consciousness until He fills all in all. He is greater than all the galaxies. The riches of Christ are profound beyond imagination. After fifty-four years as an earnest believer the present writer is aware of knowing hardly anything of Christ. But we are pressing forward. "That I may know Him!"

The moral image of Christ. Each son of God has been predestined to be in the moral image of Christ. In order for this to be true the worldliness, lust, and self-will must be driven from us by the fires of God's judgment. Also, Christ must be formed in us.

We are destined to be the eternal tabernacle of God and Christ. However, God and Christ will never dwell in Adam. We must have Christ formed in us before we are a suitable tabernacle for the Father and the Son.

Untroubled rest in Christ in the Father. Of enormous importance is our entrance into the rest of God. We must be in perfect union with Christ in God if we are to be part of the Servant of the Lord, if we are to bring justice to the nations of the world.

The salvation and Pentecostal experiences lay the groundwork for our entrance into the Kingdom of God. But it is evident that if the present-day Christians appeared with Christ they would not bring justice to the nations. They would in many instances seek their own glory or cower in fright when they were resisted. No, we are not ready to be resurrected and caught up to the Commander in Chief.

A further work of reconciliation to God must be performed before we are ready to appear with Christ and bring justice to the nations. We must be cleansed of sin and self-seeking. We must have Christ formed in us. Then the Father and the Son must make us Their eternal abode.

The purpose of the gifts and ministries of the Body of Christ is to bring each believer to perfect faith in Jesus, to the full knowledge of the Son of God, to the moral image (and ultimately, at His appearing, the exterior image) of Jesus, and to untroubled rest in the Father through the Son.

Impossible you exclaim! Not at all. Consider the greatness of God. Consider the greatness of the One who instituted the program. Is He able to do what He has stated? You must give your own answer. I have given mine.

Assuming you have accepted the invitation of God, you must now without delay address yourself to discovering and utilizing the gifts and callings on your life.

Are you an apostle? Lay aside all else and go where God sends you, bringing the knowledge of the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Are you able to prophesy? Then walk continually in the prophetic milieu, keeping in the Spirit of God at all times. Don't put yourself in situations where you lose the touch of the supernatural on your personality.

Are you an evangelist? Give yourself wholly to your ministry. There still is fruit for the Master's table waiting to be picked. Follow the Holy Spirit in this.

Are you a pastor or teacher? Set yourself aside that you may feed the sheep. Feed the sheep. Feed them with the Word of God. Disciple them with the Word of God.

Feed the sheep on grain and corn until they are fat and strong. Then they will overcome the devil and find their place in ministry. The anointing will break the yoke.

Ah, but I am none of these (supposedly) outstanding ministries! Most people aren't. There are not more than five billion other combinations of gifts and ministries waiting to be received by diligent believers, each one of which is as necessary for the maturing of the Body as the five we have mentioned. The angels are waiting on the balconies of Heaven with the gifts of the Spirit tied with bows, just waiting for someone to care enough to ask. Why don't you be one of those who ask?

When you do not find and operate your gift the Body suffers and you suffer. In time past the Lord has been patient with us as we have regarded casually the idea of our being an integral member of the Body of Christ. This patient attitude is now history. The seasons have changed. It is time for the royal priesthood, the holy nation, to be born at once.

Zion is to travail and bring forth her children. Christ is to be formed in each member of the Body.

If you wish to be resurrected and caught up to meet the Lord when He appears you absolutely must give careful attention to giving and receiving of the things of the Spirit of God. This always has been true but now more than ever.

Go to the Lord about it. Don't take my word for it. Ask Jesus. Whatever He says to you, do it.

The Servant of the Lord

"Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations." (Isaiah 42:1)

There are many advantages to being a member of Christ's Body, an integral part of the Servant of the Lord.

Are we really willing to be God's Servant? There has been so much talk lately about how Christ is going to do this and that for us I am getting the impression that Christ is our butler? Are we really His slaves? I want to be a slave of Jesus Christ and I am sure you do also.

If you are Christ's slave God will uphold you in the terrible times ahead.

You were chosen of the Lord from the foundation of the world.

God puts His Spirit on you that you may serve as a royal priest.

God will use you in a mighty way when He sends Jesus Christ back to the earth.

He will not shout or cry out, or raise his voice in the streets. (Isaiah 42:2)

The meaning of the above verse is that the members of the Body of Christ will not lift up themselves in the work of the Kingdom. Like their great Head, they will listen carefully to their Lord and work with Him, not expecting Him to bless their plans. What would the history of Christianity have been like if the believers had not lifted up themselves trying to do the work of the Kingdom and instead had waited on the Lord?

Waiting on the Lord, listening to His voice, is an easy yoke, a light burden. Lifting up ourselves in religious matters is a grinding at the mill, an onerous chore that leads only to early retirement.

A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out. In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; (Isaiah 42:3)

How do we regard weak Christians? Are we ready to judge them as misfits who never will learn to serve the Lord? Or do we wait patiently to see what God will do. Sometimes we are pleasantly surprised to see one of the Lord's plantings that had been sick for so many years suddenly come to life.

In faithfulness the Servant, Head and Body, will bring forth justice on the earth. We must learn faithfulness. It is one part of the fruit of the Spirit. Faithfulness is engraved on Christ because it is so utterly important in the Kingdom of God.

In our country, especially at the governmental level but filtering down to the lowest levels of activity, there is an abundance of lying and treachery. Such wickedness is increasing every day.

It is so good to know there is another government, another kingdom in which treachery is not permitted. The King has eyes of fire. This means they burn through all guile, all lies, all treachery. They demand truth. Where there are lies, duplicity, evasion, the fires of Divine judgment will burn until all darkness is consumed.

Today the Christian churches are filled with striving for preeminence, lies, duplicity, slander, lust, covetousness, and every other wickedness. It is not possible for any believer to appear with Christ when these behaviors are found in his or her personality.

Therefore the Divine fire is falling in our day. The Christians are being brought to judgment. All worldliness must be burned out of us. All of the lust of the flesh must be burned out of us. All self-seeking must be burned out of us.

The Lamb will have a Bride without spot, wrinkle, or any other blemish of any kind whatever.

We might think it is not possible for all the filthiness to be removed from the churches of Jesus Christ. But it shall be removed. The Word of God cannot be altered in any manner. The believers who are to appear with Jesus shall be purified.

There is no question about this. The only question is whether you and I will be willing to let the Holy Spirit have His way with us in the present hour.

He will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the islands will put their hope. (Isaiah 42:4)

The reason we become discouraged in the ministry is that we set our own goals and our own time for meeting those goals. We do not flow with the Lord. The Servant of the Lord does not set His own goals or His own times. He lives moment by moment in the Presence of God. How can he be discouraged? He knows that no power can prevent God's will from being carried out to the last point, so there is nothing to be discouraged about.

The sentence "In his law the islands will put their hope" tells the whole story. When we think of revival today we are picturing sinners repenting, souls getting saved, people being healed and filled with the Holy Spirit. Such revival is actually a renewing and refreshing of the Church itself.

God's idea of revival is much greater than this. God pictures the nations of the earth being touched with His Spirit until they are willing to obey His commandments.

Right here is a major misunderstanding of God's plan. When God called Israel out from the tribes of the earth He did not signify by this that all the remaining people were lost or were to go to Hell. Rather Israel was chosen by the Lord to be a company of priests, a holy nation who would reveal His laws to other people.

When God calls the members of the Church out of the world He does not signify by this that everyone else is going to Hell. Rather, the Church is a royal priesthood whose role is to offer sacrifices of praise and holiness to the Lord.

If everyone else were assigned to Hell the Church would have no inheritance. For whom would we serve as a royal priesthood?

God has called us out from the world to be His Presence among the nations so the islands of the sea will wait joyfully for His law.

If all the nations are assigned to Hell, how then can the Servant of the Lord bring justice to them? Are Christ and His Body to bring justice to the nations of the lost?

Who, then, is assigned to Hell? The wicked are assigned to Hell whether or not they believe in Christ. Hell is not the devil's Hell, as the saying goes, it is God's Hell. Hell is where God places the wicked of the earth, many of whom, according to Peter and Jude, assemble regularly with the Christian people.

The division between the wheat and the tares is not between the believers and the nonbelievers but between the righteous and the wicked. This does not mean we can reject Christ and be saved by practicing righteousness.

The issue today is not between the saved and the unsaved. In fact, the term "unsaved" does not appear in the Scriptures. The issue in the Gospels and the Epistles is between the elect who are following Christ and the elect who are living in the flesh.

No person can come to Jesus Christ unless the Father draw that individual. What about the remainder of mankind--those whom the Father does not draw to Jesus? Those who do good will enter eternal life at the last judgment. Those who are wicked will be cast into the Lake of fire.

What about the Christian who does not serve the Lord? He will be beaten with many stripes. He may be cast into the outer darkness. He may suffer the loss of all reward, only his spirit being saved in the Day of the Lord.

The Bible, with its blessings and curses, is written primarily to God's elect, both Jews and Christians. The rest of the world is waiting for the elect to decide to serve God according to our calling.

The Jews have never accepted the fact they are a chosen nation, much preferring to be like the rest of the world.

The Christians also enjoy prospering in the world and address the warnings of the Scriptures to those who are not called to be saints. Romans 6:23 and Hebrews 2:3 are cases in point. Neither of these verses has anything to do with those who are not called of God. They are addressed to sinning, lukewarm Christians. Yet they are preached consistently to the people of the world.

The work of evangelism is always important. But it seems that the efforts of the churches are not balanced. Instead of a proper concern for the maturing of the believers there is only the repeated emphasis that we must "preach the Gospel to the lost." But how about the lost of the churches?

When a person turns away from the world and is baptized in water, calling on the name of the Lord, the first step has been taken into the Kingdom of God. Then the new convert must come under the ministry of pastors and teachers who will place great emphasis on his growth in the Lord each day. The new believer must be fed, fed, fed the Word of God. He must be watched over to insure that he or she is not led astray by false teaching.

It does no good to get someone saved and then not teach and guide him until he is growing up to the stature of the fullness of Christ. The baby believer is not able to fulfill the Kingdom purposes of God.

Today the Christian churches are endeavoring to save souls. But in numerous instances they are not ministering adequately to those who already have received Christ.

Perhaps the assumption is being made that once the new convert joins a church the problem is solved. It is not. People attend Christian churches for fifty years and make very little progress toward spiritual maturity. But the emphasis on "saving souls" continues.

What will it require in order to bring the efforts of the churches into the balance presented in the writings of the New Testament; for it is obvious that the New Testament places far more emphasis on righteous behavior, holiness of personality, and spiritual growth than it does on getting more souls saved? It may be true that we are operating in according to our fleshly mind rather than listening to the Spirit of God.

God Almighty has chosen you and me to be members of the Body of Christ.

The Bible tells us if God's people humble themselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from their wicked ways He will heal their land. But we take this admonition and preach it to the world--our worldly government is supposed to pray, seek the face of God, and turn from its wicked ways.

The message of God is directed today to the lost, not the lost of the world but the lost sheep of the churches. It is the Christians who are living in sin and are being called on to humble themselves, pray, seek God's face, and turn away from their sins.

As God's people we are to set our life aside and give ourselves to the gifts and ministries of the Spirit of God. We are to build up ourselves and others in the most holy faith.

If we diligently, faithfully respond to the calling of God our role throughout eternity will be to represent God as His Servant throughout His creation. If we are careless we face any number of dreadful consequences. If we neglect this great salvation we will not escape serious punishment.

So it always is with God's chosen. We receive double for our sins.

The dangers are great, especially in the present hour. But many that are last in time will be first in the Kingdom.

The rewards for serving Jesus Christ are fabulous beyond the imagination of the most exalted of the kings of the earth. What is our life but a vapor. If God chooses to conform us to His image, let us get on with the job, not looking back even once.

No one can stop you if you decide to serve the King. The nations of the earth, staggering around in their blindness and vomit, are waiting for your answer.

What will it be?

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