

Exodus 20:1-17  
Psalm 19  
1 Corinthians 1:18-25  
John 2:13-22

## Sermon March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

### *Jesus Speaks Out Against Injustice*

In our gospel, Jesus sees problems with how the sacrificial system is being run in his context, and feels moved to speak out, to act (**Image One**: Jesus clearing the Temple). To challenge those people who are running the system. To challenge the injustices he is witnessing, with the hopes of changing the system into something just. Into something where everyone has access to what the system is intended to offer. A place where people experience God's holy presence, forgiveness, and love.

In fact, throughout Jesus' ministry we see that when he is confronted with a system or a situation where an injustice is occurring, he speaks out, he acts (**Image One**). Jesus wants us to know through his words and actions that he has come to make things right. To make things just.

And as followers of Jesus, we are invited to do the same. We are invited to confront injustice wherever we see it. Whether we see this injustice happening in the wider community or within our own faith community (**Image Two**: orange shirt day).

For example, Martin Luther, a Reformer, in the 1500s challenges the injustices he sees in the church in his context. Luther feels that the practice of indulgences where people could purchase papers to pardon their dead relatives from purgatory, or pardon themselves from the punishment of sin, as well as, the wrathful God theology, where the focus was on God's punishment and judgment of humanity, that dominated the church at this time, was oppressive to many people in the church. Especially towards those who were living in poverty. In response, Luther speaks out. Luther puts together a proposal with a number of reforms that addresses these injustices (**Image Two**).

Then there is Martin Luther King Jr. who challenges the racial injustices he sees in his community in the 1960s with his charismatic inspiring sermons. That bring thousands of people from all over America to hear what he has to say. Hoping that through these sermons people will change how they treat each other.

Fast forward to our generation, and we think of the church's apology to the Indigenous communities for the trauma they experienced from the residential school system. And the churches commitment to the truth and reconciliation process that is happening in communities right across Canada (**Image Two**).

Or, the ELCIC's commitment to challenging Islamophobia, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Confronting the many injustices Muslims, and people in the LGBTQIA2+ community face. Helping people from these community's experience healing and justice.

Or, the many churches across the world that are working towards becoming greener churches to help in the fight against climate change. Speaking and acting out on behalf of God's whole creation. Challenging those who continue to exploit the land for profit.

Being a follower of Jesus means being an advocate for justice, challenging the injustices we see happening in our community (**Image Two**). This is what Jesus meant last week when he invited us to take up our crosses. That we are called to challenge those who continue to perpetuate injustice in our community and in our churches. Even if this means we will face suffering along the way (**Image Three: Jesus on the cross**).

Like Martin Luther does when he is excommunicated for challenging the authorities of his time to change the system in which they run.

Like Martin Luther King Jr. does when he is murdered for speaking the truth in love. For challenging the systems of segregation that existed throughout America (**Image Three**).

Like a colleague of mine in the interfaith community does when she is reprimanded by people in her faith community for taking part in truth and reconciliation conversations (**Image Three**).

Like those of us who continue to identify as ELCIC Lutherans do when our friends, our colleagues, our siblings in Christ choose to walk away from our churches, from us because we make choices to be more welcoming to people in the LGBTQIA2+ community (**Image Three**).

Like I did when someone I knew from university said that I shouldn't be a pastor, because I wished our Muslim friends a blessed Ramadan on my Facebook account (**Image Three**).

Like many of my interfaith colleagues do when they speak out for climate justice in this city (**Image Three**).

Being a follower of Jesus means being an advocate for justice even if this means we will face suffering along the way (**Image Two**).

Because as Jesus showed us throughout his ministry. Jesus has come to make things right, to bring justice, and invites us to continue to live out and reveal where this justice is happening in our world (**Image One**). Giving people hope in God's promise that they

will experience healing and redemption from their suffering. That they will see justice prevail.

Let us pray, gracious God, when we see injustice occur, empower us to speak out against this injustice. To act for justice. When we face suffering for taking up our crosses, give us what we need to endure. And help us hope in your promise that no matter how bleak it looks, your justice will prevail. **Amen.**

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