JUSTICE (LARGE GROUP)

Lesson 1: Justice Defined

Objective: Students will be able to biblically define justice as making things right

GAME/ACTIVITY:

Introduction: Choose one, two, or all options

Option A. Drama--Have a student that you have talked to beforehand to act out in some way during the game or talk. PLAN AHEAD. Explain to this student that you will treat them unfairly after their "unruly behavior". You, as the leader, will "lose it" by yelling or screaming or throwing things (something over and above a normal reaction). Tell the student who is in on the act something like "leave and never come back". Your purpose is to get everyone to stop and hold their breath because of their shock. In the next breath, come back into your normal character and ask, "Did I treat (name of student) justly? Have students share with each other and with you. Bring the student back, thanking him/her for their participation in the act. Have them share their experience as well.

Option B. Game-Play a trivia game where you give easy questions to one group and the hard ones to another (Split the groups according to some arbitrary trait-eye color, hair length, height)

Give great prizes to the privileged group and less than great prizes or no prizes at all at the underprivileged group. Discuss the unfair treatment when students start realizing and complaining that something is not fair/right. Discuss how each member of the varying groups felt at their treatment.

Option C-What Would You Do YouTube Video - Watch the "White Woman Dresses Urban" https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GZqb8VSFkaY&list=PL8A58WOr_v6rHV3VDhP2EdRN3m1W4eOnL&index=195

Pause the video once the host asks the question, "What would you do? (time: 37 seconds) Ask your audience the same question. Have them share answers with the person next to them. Call on students to share their opinions on the situation. Unpause the video and discuss reactions and responses to how people on video responded.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION:

What is justice? *(Take some answers. Encourage connections to one of the introductory activities.)* How did you know that something was not just? Today, we are going to define justice by looking at God's Word, the Bible. God cares about justice. So did His Son, Jesus. Justice is when people of power and privilege give up that power so that others can have it for themselves. In simpler terms, justice is making things right.

In the book of Luke, Jesus meets a woman at a well in a place called Samaria. They have a conversation, which we will take a look at, and then this woman's life is forever changed. So much so, that she tells everyone in her town what she knows about this Jesus that she met.

I want to highlight places in the story where Jesus was making things right; where He was being just. Listen. (Retell the story and read the specific passages below)

Now that we have an idea of how the story goes. Let's look more closely.

V. 4 Jesus had to pass through Samaria. Most Jews in Jesus' time would have taken the long way around avoiding this place called Samaria. Why? There was bad blood between these two people groups. Samaritans were treated unjustly and poorly

because they were considered unclean half-breeds; they were not pure Jews. Samaritans hated Jews and Jews hated Samaritans. Sound familiar?

V.6-9 Jesus is tired from his travels. The sixth hour is at 12 PM. Noontime is a pretty hot part of the day. Most Jewish women would come and get their water at the cool times, either in the morning or near the end of day, when the sun was not out. The question we should be asking is why is this woman near the hottest part of the day? Was she avoiding people? Keep listening. We hear what the woman says to Jesus in verse 9 and there are two important points to make. 1) Jesus is talking to a woman. Women were often ignored and not considered very important back then. Verse 27 reinforces the idea. "The disciples marveled that he was talking to a woman."

2) Jesus, a Jew, was talking to a Samaritan!

How did Jesus start to make things right? (You can open this up to the group to keep engagement or just ask rhetorically) Jesus made things right by not ignoring her as a woman nor as a Samaritan; He saw her. He acknowledged her existence. See, this woman had less privilege and less power than a Jewish man from Jerusalem, like Jesus. Jesus made things right by crossing gender and racial barriers that society and culture had erected. He was breaking them down.

Jesus does not stop there. He never does. He keeps going. Jesus offers her Living Water (v16-18). Jesus calls her out on why she was at the well by herself avoiding other women. She was immoral, loose, promiscuous, thirsty (use whatever slang communicates to the students). So, this woman has three counts against her in the world she lived in; 1) being a woman, 2) being a Samaritan, and 3) being immoral. She was often on the outside alone; on the edges, wishing and hoping to be treated kindly, fairly, and justly despite her "flaws". Jesus is the first person who treats her in the right way. Jesus doesn't deny her womanhood, nor her identity of being a Samaritan, and even addresses her immorality with loving truth. Jesus wanted to make things right for her which is why he "had to pass through Samaria." He wanted to offer her a relationship that would never leave her wanting more. Verse 18 says, "for you had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband." Seems like this woman was wanting more, was thirsty for something that lasts. Jesus was offering her a relationship that would make things right, see her, love her, and invite her to become part of a greater story. Her life was never the same. The jug that she brought to the well to fill up with water was left behind. This lady was changed because she believed that Jesus came to make her right with God. Once she understood, what did she do? She told everyone she knew! Verse 39 says, *"Many Samaritans from that town believed in Jesus because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me all I ever did!'"*

Jesus wants to do the same for you and for me.

The most important issue that Jesus came to make right was our relationship to God Himself. We share this issue of not being right with God just like the woman at the well. There are certain traits that make us popular, powerful and privileged. We may have other traits that put us out as outcasts. The one trait that all humans, powerful or powerless, have in common is the trait of not being right with God because we treat God unfairly. He loves us and reaches out to us and we spit in His face and rebel against him. The Bible calls this broken relationship that we have with God sin. Jesus' primary mission was to make us right with God. That is why Jesus "had" to come to Earth. Jesus offered the woman Living Water telling her, in verse 13-14 "*Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of that water that I give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.*" Jesus wants to make things right between God and you. How does He accomplish that task? He died for us on a cross that paid for all our rebellion and sin. If we place our faith, like the woman and her fellow villagers, in what He did for us, then we are made right with God and can have this same living water living inside of us! We can then do like she did and share our story with others. This is amazing news! How will you respond to the offer? All it takes is faith that Jesus, and not you, can make things right. If you are honest, you would have to admit that you treat God unfairly, unjustly often. He doesn't treat you the way you deserve to be treated. He sends His Son to make your relationship with Him right. God, through Jesus, gives us justice at the cross because all things are made right in that moment. So, what is Justice? Justice is Jesus making things right in the lives of His people.

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Pray

Breakout questions-

1) Share a time that you were treated unfairly.

2) Share a time that you treated someone else unfairly.

3) How does the definition of justice you heard today help you process moments of injustice in your life or in the life of someone else?

4) Did you agree with the speaker's idea that we treat God unfairly often? Agree/Disagree Why?

5) Do you believe that Jesus wants to make things right between you and God? What is your next step?

6) How can you begin applying the definition of justice into your daily life? Give an example.

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