

Pursuing Racial Justice (3 of 4) Small Group Discussion Questions

SUNDAY WORSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The global pandemic COVID-19 has forced us to adjust and adapt how we do church and stay connected to one another as a congregation. We're not closed as a church, we're just doing church differently! So, please stay connected to the body at Grantham Church. Join our congregation for worship online at 10:30 am each Sunday morning. Follow the worship liturgy and watch our [Vimeo](#) videos at granthamchurch.org/liturgy.

As usual, the sermons will be posted to the [recent sermons page](#) on our website and at the [Grantham Church Podcast](#) the following day, along with the small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for engaging with us online!

Sunday, January 24th 2021



Sermon Title: Broken Systems & the People They Hurt

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 31:8-9; Acts 16:16-40; Matthew 25:31-46; Hebrews 13:3

Sermon Focus: The Bible tells us to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; to judge fairly and defend the rights of the poor and needy (Prov. 31:8-9). That is why we must take an honest look at America's broken criminal justice system. Listen as Dominique Gilliard (*Rethinking Incarceration*) shares about biblical characters who experienced injustice and how they responded to systems of oppression.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group in person, by phone, or video call! Use the following questions to guide your small group discussion:

1. In the first part of Dominique's message, he rooted our pursuit of racial justice and concerns for "the least of these" (e.g. prisoners) in the Scriptures. Read Proverbs 31:8-9, Matthew 25:31-46, and Hebrews 13:3. Why do you think so many Christians today don't see "social justice" issues being central to the gospel? How do we hold together matters of the soul *and* society together?
2. Dominique said that he has seen firsthand how the gospel has changed people (who have done terrible things) and transformed them within the prison system. Have you ever noticed that we have a hard time believing in redemption? For example, many conservative evangelicals believe in the death penalty and look down on ex-offenders. On the other end, progressives (far left?) have often been ruthless in their shaming, calling out, and cancelling of people who made a mistake/sinned, or are just not where they are in their journey. How should the church be different in the way we preach and practice biblical redemption?
3. Dominique expounded on Acts 16:16-40 from the perspective of a minority. Think about how Paul and Silas sought to liberate a woman who was being exploited both by spiritual *and* economic powers. Consider how they were treated as Jews and outsiders, until Paul spoke up about his Roman citizenship. How does this passage show privilege and racism at work? How does this story compare to contemporary stories of racial and economic injustice in America?
4. Dominique said this about Paul and Silas' actions in Acts 16:
"They owned the responsibility of addressing the cancerous effects of privilege, even though they did not create the problem. They refused to walk away and consider their hands clean just because they were not the ones who created the biased system or enacted judicial oppression. They knew these individualistic approaches were not aligned with the cruciform ethic of Christ."

While white Christians today didn't create the systemic racial problems we have in America, we do benefit from them, and some even work to sustain them and keep them in place. How do you see that happening all around you?

5. How is God speaking to you through our *Pursuing Racial Justice* series? How is it challenging you? How is it encouraging you? What gives you hope?