

Jesus, Justice & the Third Way (4 of 6) Small Group Discussion Questions

Join our congregation for worship in-person or online at 10:30 am each Sunday via our [Grantham Church YouTube Channel](#). If you ever miss a message, the sermons are always posted to the recent sermons page at our website and at the Grantham Church Podcast the following day, along with the sermon slides and small group discussion questions under Worship Resources. Thank you for staying connected with us!

Sunday, October 27th, 2024



Series Focus: In *Jesus, Justice & the Third Way*, we are reflecting on the political nature of the gospel and how we are called to pledge allegiance to the Lamb—not the donkey or the elephant. We are examining Jesus’ posture and approach to political matters and seeing how he dealt with political parties, hot-button issues, and the “partisan mind” that fuels division. Join us for this timely sermon series as we consider what it looks like to follow the Lamb in an age of idolatry and division, so that we might be faithful to Christ until he returns and brings the fullness of his Kingdom on the earth.

Sermon Title: The Third Way for Extreme Days

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5:38-48, 22:33-40; Mark 12:13-17; John 8:1-11

Sermon Focus: It’s important to look closely at how Jesus responded to hot-button issues and polarizing debates in his day. We can see several examples in the gospels of how Jesus navigated the extremes. What is the “Third Way” and how did Jesus model it for us? Also, what are the issues and extremes today? Are we “biting the bait” or are we embodying the Third Way? In the fourth message of our series, Pastor David invites us to adopt Jesus’ posture and approach to polarizing debates and extremes.

Thank you for going deeper in conversation with your small group. Use the following questions to help *guide* your small group discussion:

1. Read Matthew 5:38-48 and Matthew 22:15-46. Notice that several of the religio-political groups or parties of Jesus' day are mentioned in these two passages: tax collectors, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians. What else do you notice? How are they portrayed? What does it reveal about their feelings toward Jesus? And how does this sort of division and polarization resemble our own day?
2. Jesus stood with the oppressed and the marginalized, but he did not "take sides" and fully align himself with a political party or group? Instead, Jesus revealed that the gospel couldn't be fully captured or contained within these groups, and he was careful not to be drawn into the "us vs. them" combative thinking of the partisan mind. How does Jesus' example challenge you?
3. Pastor David presented us with five different examples of hot-button issues and polarizing debates in Jesus' day (e.g., Roman occupation, paying taxes to Rome, inheritance, capital punishment, and divorce). Jesus's responses were shocking and challenging! That's because when Jesus is asked to weigh in on a politically controversial and polarizing issue or debate, he reveals the following pattern:
 1. He refused to bite the bait and "take a side" between the two by not accepting the way his opponents framed the issues.
 2. He reframed the issue and/or question to reveal the underlying problems with both options, which were often extremes.
 3. He called his followers back to the agape commandment (love God and neighbor) and to imagine another (i.e., "third") way.

Next week we will look at contemporary issues, but what comes to mind already? What issues or debates do you think of when you see this pattern? How might we apply this Third Way pattern to a contemporary issue today?

4. Pastor David said: "A Jesus-like Third Way approach is centered on our attitudinal posture and the two-part agape commandment: to love God and love our neighbor. The center is *not* our political parties, positions, or favored policies. This Third Way of Jesus helps us move from the WHAT of policies and ideology to the HOW of spiritual values and relationships, which helps to deescalate and curb injustice and division. It helps us to humanize each other." In what ways have we *dehumanized* others? How is God speaking to you about reversing this practice and adopting the Third Way approach and posture?
5. What else is the Spirit saying to you through this series up to this point? Take some time as a group to close in prayer for each other and our community.