



Small Group Materials

Theme
Week

Social Injustice
14

STARTER



Begin by reading together the 'Magnificat' Luke 1.46-55 Reflect on Mary's vision that Jesus would 'bring down the mighty from their thrones and lift up the lowly!'

Recognise that Mary was perhaps the only person who saw from the very beginning that Jesus would 'turn things upside down'

DISCUSS



Ask the group

What do we mean by the phrase 'social injustice'?

Remember that it was one of the great themes of the prophets in the Old Testament to speak out against all forms of social injustice.

BIBLE



READ Isaiah 58.1-12

On a sheet of paper, list the issues that Isaiah exposes and challenges here?

Why is it important for these issues to be challenged?

Jesus deliberately chose a life of disadvantage – draw this out by asking the following question:

How does the life of Jesus, from his birth to his death, show him to be on the side of the disadvantaged and the poor?

READ Luke chapter 16 verses 19 to 31

What is the message that Jesus wants us to hear in this story?

How can we respond to it practically?

FOCUS



- ▶ Welcome people
- ▶ Remind people that we are in our fifth and final section in our look of the ministry of Jesus. This week we look at the second theme in this three-week series – 'Social Injustice'
- ▶ We will look at some of the background to this in the Old Testament, and at a couple of parables of Jesus that show his concern.

- ▶ This passage is one of the high points of the Old Testament – as the needs of the poor are recognised and the attitudes of the rich challenged.
- ▶ The importance of Isaiah to those who were seeking the Messiah at that time can hardly be overstated. The portions of Isaiah found (including the only complete scroll of an Old Testament book) hugely dominate the Dead Sea Scroll scrolls. Both John the Baptist (Isaiah 40 in his baptism ministry) and Jesus (Isaiah 61 in Nazareth) quote from Isaiah in declaring the ministry vision that God has given them.'

READ Matthew chapter 25 verses 31 to 46

What are the similarities of this story with the Rich Man and Lazarus?

What are the differences?

How can we respond to the challenge of Jesus in this story?

► Much of the later part of Luke's Gospel focuses on the right use and distribution of resources – especially money and power – and of the need for Christians to be very wary of the temptations that these things bring. This vivid parable points to the deep unfairness in both our society and in the wider world.

DISCUSS



How 'fair' is our own society in Britain?

What are the particular social injustices that Jesus would want to highlight in our society?

How can the Church begin do this on his behalf?

APPLY



Give out copies on the quiz on the next page. The instructions are on the sheet. Give people a few minutes on their own to fill in their answers. Put people into pairs or threes to discuss their answers.

Back together in the group

Can you think of anything else that really needed to be on that list of social injustices?

Which of them should the church have as its number one priority to begin to address?

PRAYER



- *For the key social issues that you have recognised in our society in this session*
- *For courage for the Church to begin to address injustice no matter the cost*
- *For the one key issue that what just picked out, and for insight from God as to how our Church might begin to act*

SHAPED PEOPLE

Social Injustice Quiz

Here are TEN social injustices that may apply in our own country. Working on your own, tick boxes to say whether you think that each one applies in our own country, in both our country and the wider world, or only in the wider world.

	Just in UK	Both UK and world	Just in wider world
The gap between rich and poor			
Some being born into privilege and wealth, whilst others are born into poverty.			
Educational opportunities being available to some and not to others.			
Better health care for those who can pay for it.			
Exploitation of poorer countries by richer nations			
Arms sales to corrupt regimes			
Racism and abuse of Asian people			
The treatment of asylum seekers and refugees.			
The excessive wages of some who work in the banking industry.			
People becoming victims to loan sharks			