

Polly's Pondering

He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you except to be just, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Did you know that justice is not only what God requires of us but also is the very essence of God? My friend and Biblical teacher, Denise, reminded me of this truth. Pointing me to a verse in Deuteronomy, which is part of "The Song of Moses" which is intended to be a memory tool for future generations that the song and its message will not be lost. It begins by ascribing greatness to God, whom he calls the Rock:

"The Rock, His work is perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God, without deceit, just and upright is He;" Deuteronomy 32:4

It is no wonder that we have a great desire for justice. You hear the cries for it daily. After all, the Bible tells us that we are created in the image of God. Therefore, we too should be just, loving, and humble. Not only because it was commanded to us, but because that image lives within our very beings. So why is justice not a part of our everyday living? Perhaps that can be explained by the verse that follows the previous one.

"Yet His degenerate children have dealt falsely with Him, a perverse and crooked generation." Deuteronomy 32:5

It seems to me that we will never get a handle on justice until we turn our attention back to God. Without God as the image of the justice we cry out for our desires become motivated with selfish motives and look more like vengeance than the justice God requires. Without God as our common ideal we become divided and instead of working side by side to bring God's justice to our land, we form sides and label one the victim and one the victimizer. Neither of which is helpful in the pursuit of justice, because the focus moves to shaming, demeaning, and punishing the victimizer while simultaneously crippling the other with a victim mentality. To be successful, justice must be all individuals working together with a common understanding of both their worth as created in the image of God and of their tendency toward selfish motivations that do not honor the image in which they were created or their Creator. We must seek to act out of love and to practice kindness and walk humbly, setting aside our own selfish desires and motivations but instead choosing to walk with God, to choose His path, His ways, His thoughts, His desires, His will.

The Bible tells us that if we know Jesus, we know the Father who sent him. So perhaps it could be said that we all need a little Jesus. If we can work together to find pathways to justice that do not include condemning, shaming, indulging, demeaning, and labeling, none of which brings us closer to the justice we all desire, but rather acknowledge and reflect God who created us unique and different, yet each with His likeness, then we can finally put our difficult past behind us and move toward a more just future.