

# Gaining Clarity on Justice and Righteousness in the Bible

March 5, 12, 19

Minnehaha Academy

**Bill Barberg**

**Preston Peterson**



Lesson Three: Justice and Righteousness in the New Testament

# Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning

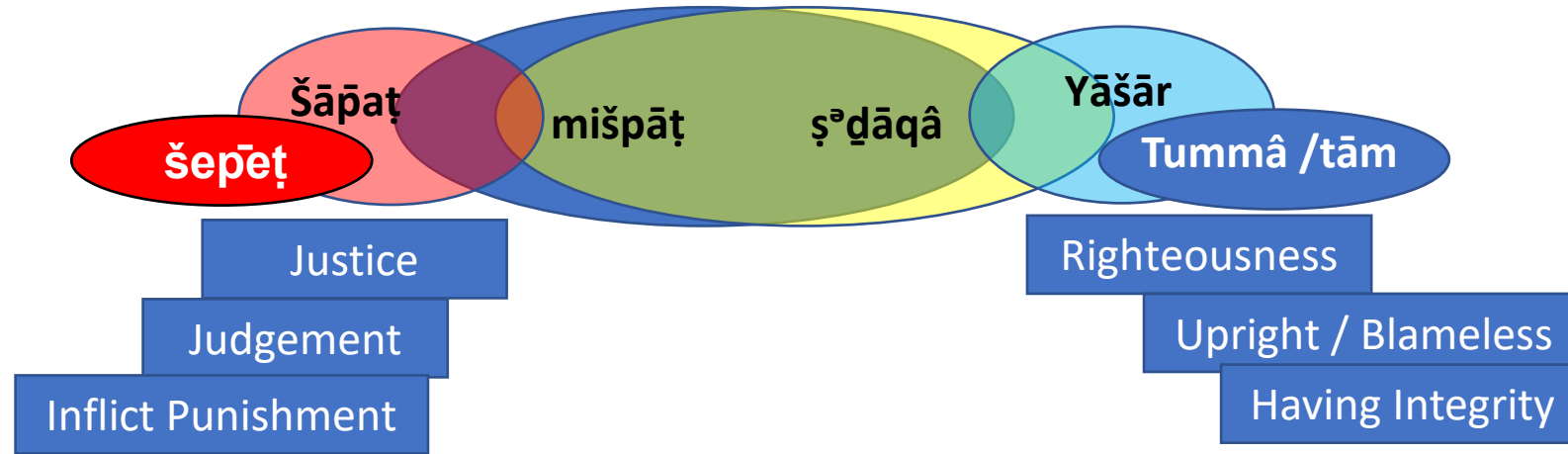
mišpāṭ

Justice

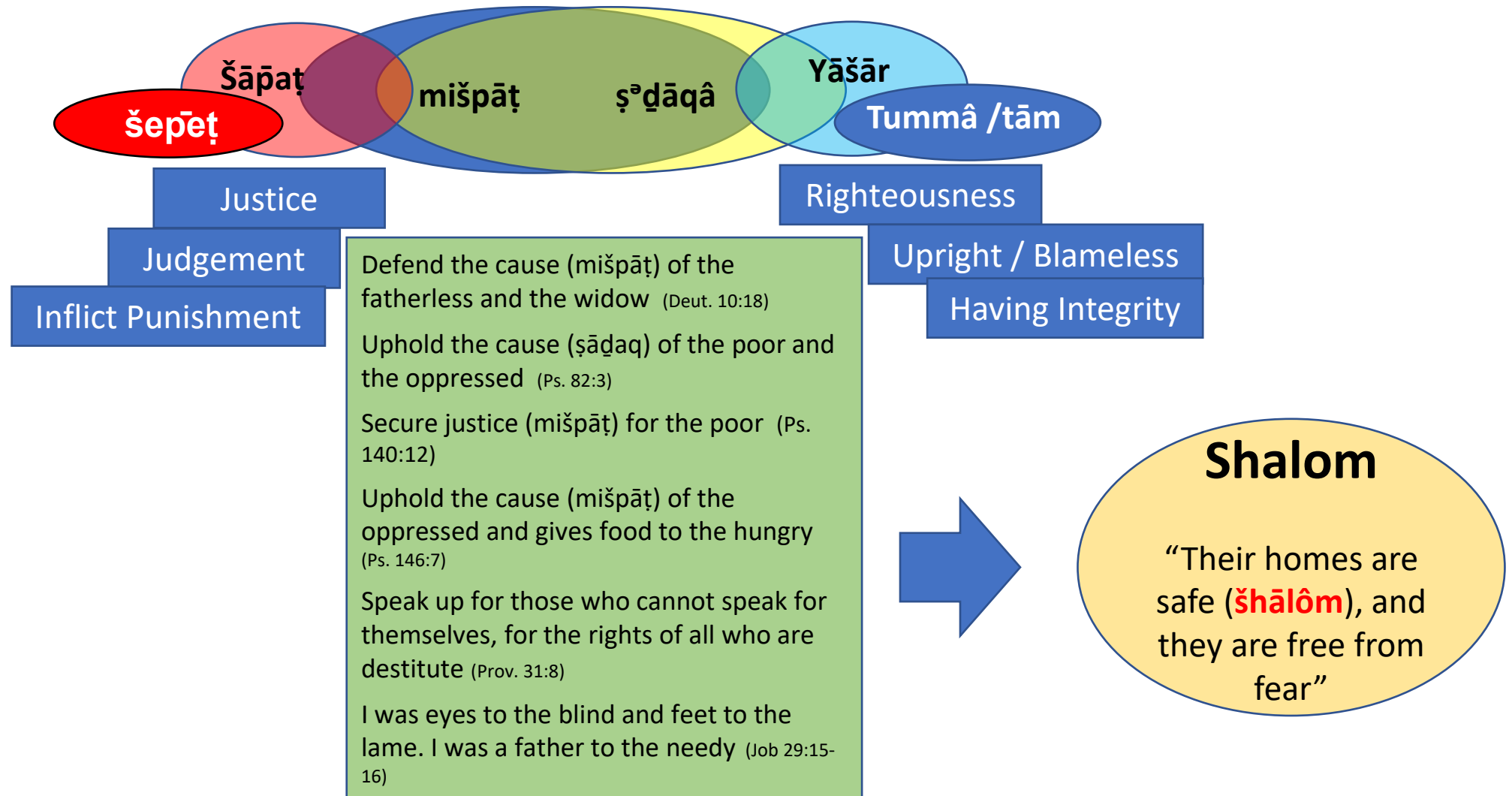
ṣ̣ḏāqâ

Righteousness

# Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning

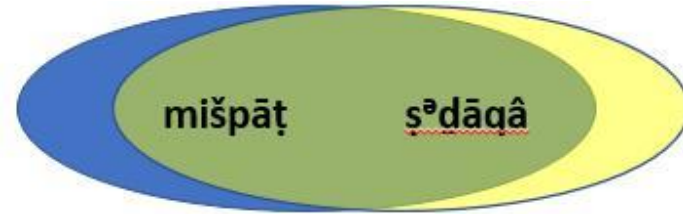


# Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning



Loving our (vulnerable) neighbors as ourselves

# Scriptures that Help us Understand the Meaning



Defend the *cause* (mišpāṭ) of the fatherless and the widow (Deut. 10:18)

Uphold the *cause* (ṣādaq) of the poor and the oppressed (Ps. 82:3)

Secure *justice* (mišpāṭ) for the poor (Ps. 140:12)

Uphold the *cause* (mišpāṭ) of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry (Ps. 146:7)

I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy (Job 29:15-16)

I made the widow's heart sing. (Job 29:13)

**Loving our (vulnerable) neighbors as ourselves - Spreading šhālôm**

# Jesus Setting the Context

## **Matthew 21:23, 28-31**

Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him.

...

Jesus: “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’

“ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go.”

“Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you.

# Jesus continues...

## Matthew 21:32

“For John [the Baptist] came to you to show you the way of *righteousness* (**dikaiosynē**), and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.”

## Two Key Paths of Learning:

Understanding what John the Baptist taught about **the way of righteousness**

Learning more about the Greek: **dikaiosynē**

# John the Baptist's Teaching on the Way of Righteousness

## Luke 3:7-8a

But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he [John] was baptizing, he said to them: “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath?”

“Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.”

**What did he mean by “produce fruit” ?**

**What did he mean by in “keeping with repentance”?**



# Potential Meanings for “Produce Fruit”

## Have babies

“Be fruitful and multiply.” (Gen. 1:28 and other places)

## Go into agriculture and produce fruit for food, wine, and trade

“So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.”

(Joshua 24:13)



Numbers 13:23

# How have we typically thought of “being fruitful”

## **Baptisms**

“Were you fruitful last year?”

“I’m praying to be fruitful in the next year.”

But Jesus had not even started his ministry yet. The concept of making disciples and baptizing them would not make sense at all.

## **The Fruits of the Spirit**

Had the Holy Spirit been poured out for indwelling in people?

When did the first teachings of the “fruits of the Spirit” appear?

Would that have made sense to the audience John was preaching to?

# The Song of the Vineyard

**Many of John's audience would have memorized this part of Isaiah 5**

## **Isaiah 5:1-6**

I will sing for the one I love a song about his vineyard: My loved one had a vineyard on a fertile hillside. He dug it up and cleared it of stones and planted it with the choicest vines. He built a watchtower in it and cut out a winepress as well. **Then he looked for a crop of good grapes, but it yielded only bad fruit.**"

"Now you dwellers in Jerusalem and people of Judah, judge between me and my vineyard. What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? **When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?**"

# The Song of the Vineyard

## Isaiah 5:1-6 (continued)

“Now I will tell you what I am going to do to my vineyard: I will take away its hedge, and it will be destroyed; I will break down its wall, and it will be trampled.”

“I will make it a wasteland, neither pruned nor cultivated, and briers and thorns will grow there. I will command the clouds not to rain on it.”

# Back to Jesus

**Immediately after telling people that John taught them the way of righteousness, Jesus continued... (Matt. 21:33-35)**

“Listen to another parable: There was a landowner who planted a vineyard. He put a wall around it, dug a winepress in it and built a watchtower. Then he rented the vineyard to some farmers and moved to another place..

“When the harvest time approached, he sent his servants to the tenants to **collect his fruit.**”

“The tenants seized his servants; they beat one, killed another, and stoned a third.”

# Parable of the Tenants (continued)

**Matt. 21:40-41, 43**

“Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?”

“He will bring those wretches to a wretched end,” they replied, “and he will rent the vineyard to other tenants, who will give him his share of the crop at harvest time.”

[Jesus continued...]

“Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people **who will produce its fruit.**”

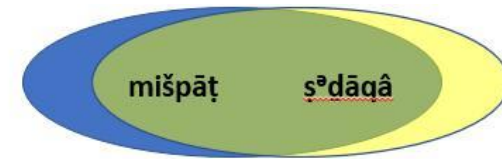
# What Were John and Jesus Talking About?

Back to the well-known “**Song of the Vineyard**” in Isaiah 5 where it said (twice) that the LORD was looking for **good fruit**.

## Isaiah 5:7

“The vineyard of the LORD Almighty is the nation of Israel, and the people of Judah are the vines he delighted in.

And he looked for *justice* (**mišpāṭ**), but saw bloodshed; for *righteousness* (**š<sup>o</sup>dāqâ**), but heard cries of distress.



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The **good fruit** that the LORD was looking for was **mišpāṭ** and **š<sup>o</sup>dāqâ**.

The people were **not** being blessed with **šhālôm** by Abraham’s descendants (**zeraʿ**).

# John the Baptist's Teaching on the Way of Righteousness

**Luke 3:8a, 9**

**“Produce fruit** in keeping with repentance.”

...

**“The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit** will be cut down and thrown into the fire.”



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John was calling people to produce the good fruit of **mišpāt** and **ṣ<sup>ə</sup>dāqâ**.

Jesus called his disciples to produce good fruit in John 15:1-8

Jesus also called his disciples to harvest “a crop for eternal life” in John 4:36

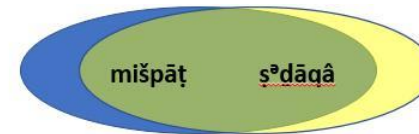


# John the Baptist's Teaching on the Way of Righteousness

## Luke 3:10-11

“What should we do then?” the crowd asked.”

John answered, “Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.”



He gave specific examples of doing **mišpāt** and **š°dāqâ**: *Giving clothing to the poor and food to the hungry.*



# Producing Good Fruit in Keeping with Repentance

**Luke 3:8a**

“Produce fruit in **keeping with repentance.**”

**Ezekiel 18:20-22**

“The one who sins is the one who will die. The child will not share the guilt of the parent, nor will the parent share the guilt of the child. The righteousness of the righteous will be credited to them, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against them.”

“But if a wicked person turns away from all the sins they have committed and keeps all my decrees and does what is just and right, that person will surely live; they will not die.”

“None of the offenses they have committed will be remembered against them. Because of the righteous things they have done, they will live.”



# Ezekiel's Examples of sins and $\text{ṣ}^{\text{e}}\text{ḏāqâ}$



## Ezekiel 18:15-17a

“He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor’s wife.”

“He does not oppress anyone or require a pledge for a loan. He does not commit robbery but gives his food to the hungry and provides clothing for the naked.”

“He withholds his hand from mistreating the poor and takes no interest or profit from them.”

# John the Baptist's Teaching on the Way of Righteousness



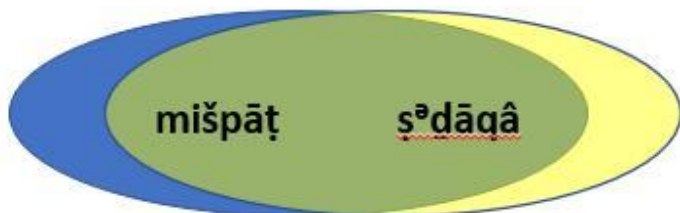
## Luke 3:12-13

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. “Teacher,” they asked, “what should we do?”

“Don’t collect any more than you are required to,” he told them.

## v14

Then some soldiers asked him, “And what should we do?” He replied, “Don’t extort money and don’t accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.”



In Luke 21:32, Jesus said “For John [the Baptist] came to you to show you the way of *righteousness* (**dikaio<sup>s</sup>ynē**)”

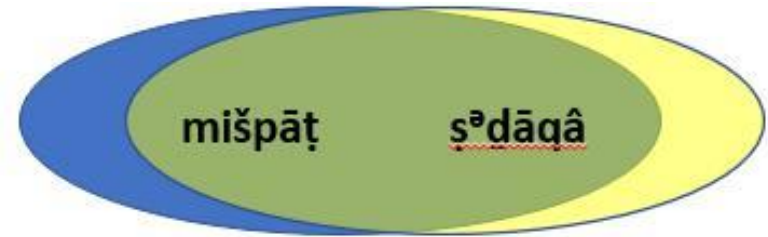
# John's Teaching of Repentance brought Shalom to People

If people are producing *good fruit* in keeping with *repentance*...

- The naked will be clothed.
- The hungry will be fed.
- Those who were exploited by tax collectors will be rescued.
- Those who had been extorted by the soldiers would no longer be oppressed



The Messiah-King, as prophesied, is establishing



The Prince of **šhālôm** and his followers are delivering a blessing of peace & safety for the vulnerable and oppressed,

John's message also announced the blessing of forgiveness & salvation

# Clarifying Matthew 6:33

## Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his *righteousness* (**dikaiosynē**), and all these things will be added to you.

iFaith  
Sermon on the Mount  
Lesson Q



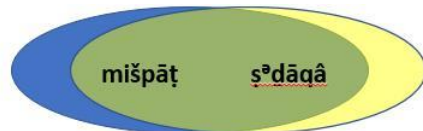
# Discussion (Talk for 3 minutes with someone next to you)

The Song of the Vineyard (Isaiah 5)

Ezekiel's teaching on repentance

Isaiah's rebuke on not obeying the second greatest commandment

The Message of the Prophets



The call to “produce fruit”

Clarity on repentance

Understanding Jesus' emphasis “seeking righteousness”



The rebukes & teachings of John and Jesus



# Greek translations of mišpāṭ in quoted Hebrew Scriptures

**Matthew 12:17-18, 20** (Quoting from Isaiah 42:1-4)

This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim **justice** (Greek = **krisis** and Hebrew = **mišpāṭ**) to the nations.”

“A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he has brought **justice** (Greek = **krisis** and Hebrew = **mišpāṭ**) through to victory.”

# Adding Greek to our Word Map

**Greek**

krisis

dikaiosynē

**Hebrew**

šāpāṭ

šepēṭ

mišpāṭ

š<sup>ʿ</sup>dāqâ

Yāšār

Tummâ /tām

**English**

Justice

Judgement

Inflict Punishment

Loving our (vulnerable)  
neighbors as ourselves

Righteousness

Upright / Blameless

Having Integrity

# Clarifying the Powerful Rebukes of Jesus

## Matthew 23:23-28

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have **neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness**. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. (23:23)

You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. (23:24)

## Luke 11:37-42

“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you **neglect justice and the love of God**. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. (11:42)

# Clearly Seeing what Jesus Emphasized

**In Matthew 23:23, Jesus said:**

“But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—**justice** (Greek = **krisis** ← Hebrew = **mišpāṭ**), **mercy and faithfulness**.

**In Luke 11:42, Jesus said:**

“you neglect **justice** (Greek = **krisis** ← Hebrew = **mišpāṭ**) and **the love of God**.

**Micah 6:8** ... what does the LORD require of you but to do *justice* (**mišpāṭ**), and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

# Clarifying the Powerful Rebukes of Jesus

## Matthew 23:23-28

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You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel. (23:24)

“Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of **greed and self-indulgence**. (23:25)

Blind Pharisee! First **clean the inside of the cup and dish**, and then the outside also will be clean. (23:26)

## Luke 11:37-42

“Woe to you Pharisees, because you give God a tenth of your mint, rue and all other kinds of garden herbs, but you **neglect justice and the love of God**. You should have practiced the latter without leaving the former undone. (11:42)

Then the Lord said to him, “Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of **greed and wickedness**. (11:39)

But now as for what is inside you—**be generous to the poor, and everything will be clean for you**. (11:41)

# Either Greek Word often Refers to the Overlapping Concept



**Greek**

krisis

dikaiosynē

**Hebrew**

šāpāṭ

šepēṭ

mišpāṭ

šׁדָּאָה

Yāšār

Tummâ /tām

**English**

Justice

Judgement

Inflict Punishment

Loving our (vulnerable)  
neighbors as ourselves

Righteousness

Upright / Blameless

Having Integrity

Don't  
Neglect  
Justice

Clean  
the  
Inside of  
the Dish

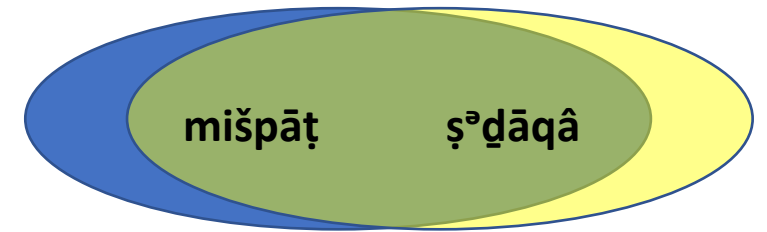
# A Key Part of Dikaiosynē is Giving to the Needy

## Matthew 6:1

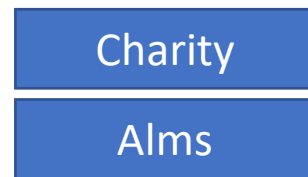
“Be careful not to practice your *righteousness* (**dikaiosynē**) in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

## Matthew 6:2

“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full.”



Loving our (vulnerable) neighbors as ourselves



One of the ways we “do Justice” and practice righteousness

# The Characteristics of the dikaios in Matthew 25 (Sheep & Goats)

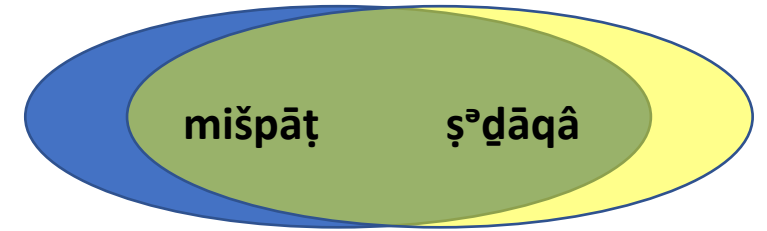
## Matthew 25:37-40

“Then the *righteous* (**dikaïos**) will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?’

When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?

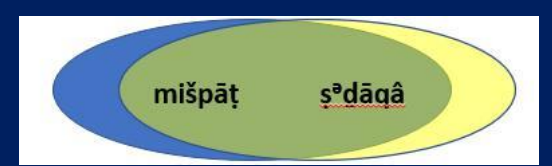
When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?’

“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’



Loving our (vulnerable)  
neighbors as ourselves





## 2 Corinthians 5:14-16a, Paul wrote:

“For Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live **should no longer live for themselves but for him** who died for them and was raised again.”

How does understanding of **mišpāṭ** and **ṣᵃdāqâ** help us understand how we can live for Christ rather than for ourselves?

# A Practical Way to do dikaiosynē (from Jesus)

## Luke 14:12-14

“Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid.

But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous (**dikaioi**).”

**Suggestion: Re-listen to last year’s sermon series on hospitality, with a deeper understanding of mišpāṭ and ṣ<sup>ᵉ</sup>dāqâ, and take actions to practice hospitality to some disadvantaged or marginalized people.**

# The Example of Cornelius

## Acts 10:1-2 (NIV)

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; **he gave generously to those in need** and prayed to God regularly.

## Acts 10:30-31 (NIV)

Cornelius answered: “Three days ago I was in my house praying at this hour, at three in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, ‘Cornelius, God has heard your prayer and **remembered your gifts to the poor.**’

## Acts 10:34-35 (NIV)

Then Peter began to speak: “I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism, but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does *what is right* (**dikaiosynē**).”

# The First Recorded Message of Jesus' Ministry

**Luke 4:18-21** (Where Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

**This is from Isaiah 61, which includes verse 8...**

“For I, the LORD, love *justice* (**mišpāṭ**);”

# NT Fulfillment of the Good Shepherd(s) doing Mishpat

## Matthew 2:6 (the Magi)

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will **shepherd my people** Israel.”

## Many parts of the New Testament show how these prophecies are fulfilled

Matt. 9:36 and Mark 6:34 He saw people like sheep without a shepherd

John 10:11 “I am the Good Shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.”

John 21:16 “If you love me, take care of my sheep.”

Acts 20:28 To the Ephesian elders, “Be shepherds of God’s church.”

1 Peter 5:1-4 To the elders, “Be shepherds of God’s flock.”

Eph 4:11-12 Pastors (Gk: shepherds) are to build up the body for works of service

Hebrews 13:10 – Jesus is the great shepherd of the sheep

Jude 1:12 – Rebuking shepherds who only feed themselves, echoing Ezekiel 34

# Two Roles of Jesus described in Revelation

## Revelation 7:17

“For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; ‘he will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.

## Two Roles of Jesus

- The **Lamb** (sacrifice for our sins)                      Blessing All Nations with Forgiveness
- The **Shepherd** (lead his people with **mišpāṭ**)                      Blessing All Nations with **šhālôm**

# How OT Themes Continue in the NT

The Blessings of Abraham

mišpāṭ s̄dāqâ

The Wisdom Literature  
and OT Examples

mišpāṭ s̄dāqâ

Bad and Good Shepherds

mišpāṭ s̄dāqâ

The Messiah and the Kingdom

mišpāṭ s̄dāqâ

The Message of the Prophets

mišpāṭ s̄dāqâ

Two Pathways of Blessings

The “more important” practices

Jesus, Leaders and Disciples

Our Savior and Lord/King

The rebukes of John and Jesus

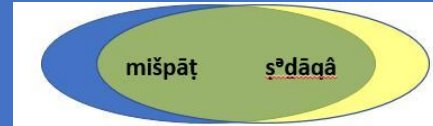
# Understanding the Gospel

## The Lifeboat Gospel

Forgiveness of sins  
Salvation  
Eternity in Heaven

## The Gospel

Forgiveness of sins  
Salvation  
Eternity in Heaven



Hope & Healing  
Shalom



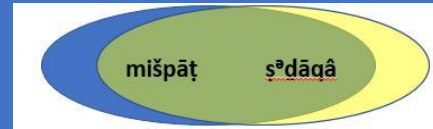
# A Danger to Avoid

## The Lifeboat Gospel

Forgiveness of sins  
Salvation  
Eternity in Heaven

## The Gospel

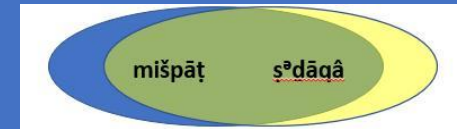
Forgiveness of sins  
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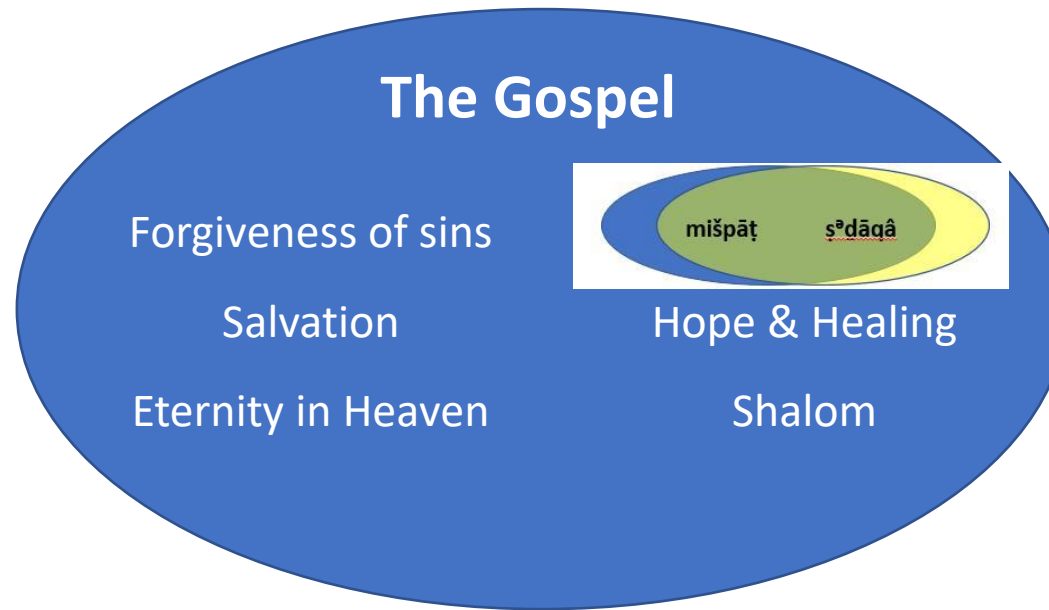
Hope & Healing  
Shalom

## The Social Justice Gospel

A more equitable world



# The Importance of the Cross



## **The ransom paid for our sins.**

Romans 5:6, 8-9

*You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly.*

*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

*Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!*

## **An example of how we are to love others**

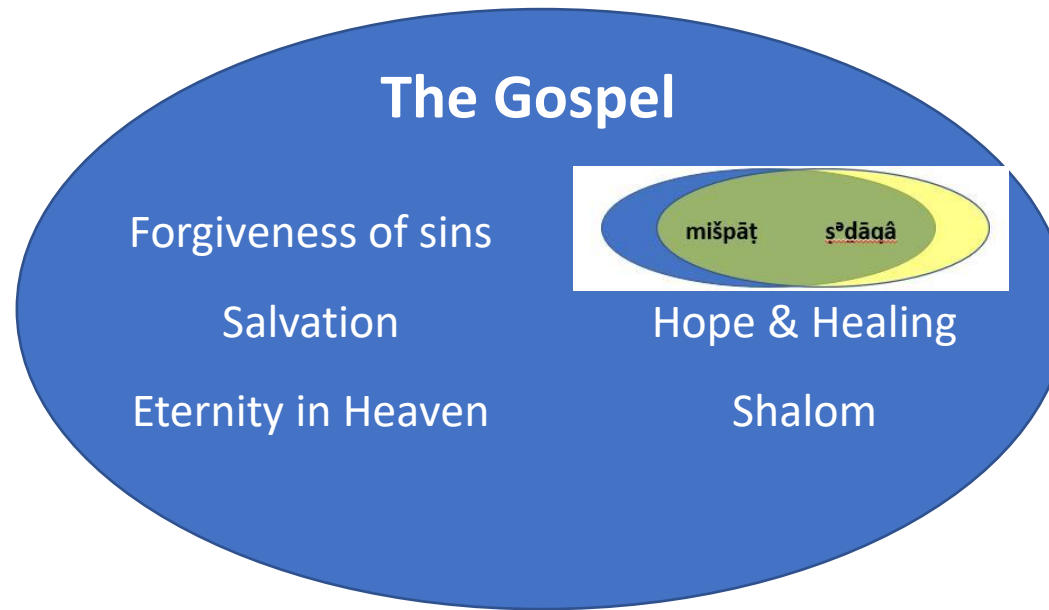
Luke 9:23

*Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me.*

2 Corinthians 5:15

*And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.*

# The Greatest Commands



## Love God with all your heart

Turn from idolatry

Worship, adoration, praise, and thanksgiving

Intentionally engage with his Word (Bible)

A rich, deep prayer life

## Love your neighbor as yourself

Sacrificially care for the marginalized and oppressed

Meet the needs of widows, orphans, and the like

Practice hospitality to strangers

Do Justice (mishpat)

← **Obey God** →  
**Repent of sins**  
**Walk in God's Ways**

# Jesus taught how his followers give glory to God

**Matthew 5:14, 16** (after preaching the beatitudes)

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.

...

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.”

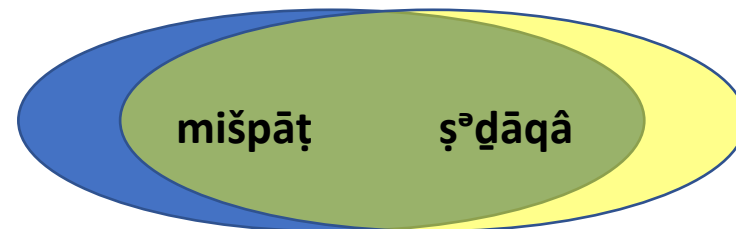
We are **not** to “do justice and righteousness” to get glory **for ourselves**.

Good works are a great way to attract people to learn about Jesus.

# Mishpat continued in James

## James 1:27

“Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.



Loving our (vulnerable)  
neighbors as ourselves

So... What should we do?

# Make it a Priority – Devote Time to Doing Mishpat & Tzedakah

- Keep Learning about **mišpāt** and **ṣ̣ḏāqâ** (Proverbs 28:5)
  - Rewatch these videos (stop, read, pray, think)
  - Watch the videos in the handouts and blog post
  - Read the articles
  - Use [www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org) as your “mishpat glasses”
- Pick a topic to learn about so you can do justice (Is. 1:17)
  - Widows (challenges facing vulnerable seniors and how to address them)
  - Orphans globally and kids in (or at risk) of being in the child welfare system
  - Early childhood education and care / literacy skills
  - Refugees
  - Struggling families
  - Homeless and housing insecure
- Plan actions and do them (ideally with others)

# Gaining Clarity on Justice and Righteousness in the Bible

March 5, 12, 19

Minnehaha Academy

**Bill Barberg**

**Preston Peterson**



Coming Soon – Recordings that Merge Audio & Slides