

Justice starts with me

Keep justice. Two words that every society holds in some form. The variance is so wide that what is clearly justice to one is outright evil to another. These are words that humanity has tussled with since Cain murdered Abel and God both punished Cain and protected him. When we consider that the name “Cain” is a wordplay on “to acquire” and the name “Abel” is the same word many translations render as “vanity” (as in passing/temporary) in Ecclesiastes, the picture gets even more interesting.

God is interested in justice. The concept and the word are scattered throughout the Old Testament and failing to keep it results in discipline, which equates to defeat in battle, being overrun by enemies, destruction, and exile. To head into even deeper water consider Deuteronomy 32:35-36, “Vengeance is mine, and recompense, for the time when their foot shall slip; for the day of their calamity is at hand, and their doom comes swiftly. For the LORD will vindicate his people

and have compassion on his servants, when he sees that their power is gone, and there is none remaining, bond or free.” Even more, the apostle Paul in Romans 12:17-21 says, “Repay no one evil

for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” No, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

Paul then immediately says to believers in the capital city of the Empire, “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God’s servant for your good.” (Romans 13:1-4a).

Justice is complex enough when considered from either a secular or theological viewpoint. These viewpoints can never be fully separated and are constantly tugging at

each other — even more so in societies that have strong representations of more than one faith tradition.

What is the balance between punishment and grace? Recall the story of the woman “caught in the act” who was dragged in front of Jesus as a test case in John 8. What the law said and what Jesus did were at odds. Remember the incident in Corinth in which Paul recommends in the first letter that the fellowship with a man who was “even worse than the gentiles” in his behavior. By the time he wrote the second letter he said this, “So although I wrote to you, it was not on account of the one who did the wrong, nor on account of the one who suffered the wrong, but in order that your zeal for us might be revealed to you in the sight of God. Therefore we are comforted.” (II Corinthians 7:12-13).

There is clearly more to justice than crime and punishment. Justice plays a role in preserving a fair society in which no one person (or group of persons) has the final say. From the standpoint of the Bible, we all will

answer for what we have done. Every nation and culture will answer for the way it treats not only its citizens but those who are not.

Justice, by its nature leans toward “taking sides.” The Bible mitigates this by teaching forgiveness and deferring vengeance to the one who created us all. The teaching concerning God placing the powers that be prevents us from taking justice into our own hands. While this may make a good movie, it will wreak havoc on society. Knowing that God will judge gives us courage to continue to, “Keep justice, and do righteousness, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.” (Isaiah 56:1).

What follows in Isaiah 56 is a reminder to each person to hold tightly onto justice and righteousness. It is a reminder for each of us to keep from doing evil. Anyone...anyone! who does so will be part of God’s design. Anyone is welcome in God’s house that sets aside self and pursues peace and justice — “for my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations.”

Macedonia Baptist shows pastor love on 20th anniversary

BY CHIP HUTCHESON | KENTUCKY TODAY KUTTAWA — Macedonia Baptist Church surprised Bryan Grigg on his 20th anniversary as the church’s pastor — a time that Grigg said “has been a true blessing from the Lord.”

Grigg left a youth minister position in Bardstown, Kentucky, for his first pastorate — to go to the much smaller community in Lyon County. “But we fell in love with the people,” he said.

Previously, Grigg had been recruited to be a Fellowship of Christian Athletes leader, but found that the personal connections in that role would be minimal. That was not the relationship dynamic he wanted. He found the strong personal component at Macedonia, and on the milestone anniversary reflected on what he learned in seminary. “I was taught to stay at a place — I never felt that the Lord was telling me to go from here. There were some tough times early on, but God’s grace was sufficient to

get me through it. The people have loved on me and cared for me.”

He recalled the admonition years ago from a former chairman of deacons, now deceased, who told him, “If you take care of God’s man, he will take care of you.”

The Grigg family has experienced that.

Greg noted the providential timing of the anniversary with his preaching schedule. He preaches through books of the Bible, and two weeks ago arrived at 1 Tim. 5:17: “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”

The week before the anniversary, Grigg was presented a certificate in recognition of his milestone anniversary from Rick Reeder of the Caldwell-Lyon Baptist Association. Then the following week came the surprise celebration. “It was neat to see how God brought that together,” Grigg said.

CHURCH CALENDAR

SPECIAL SERVICES

St. James Christian Methodist Church, 800 Tennessee St., Paducah, will celebrate its 166th Church Anniversary at 11 a.m. Sunday. The speaker will be Rev. Zachary Easterly, senior pastor of Mount Zion CME Church in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. Joseph D. Benbery is the host pastor. Information: 270-575-3498.

SUBMIT ITEMS

Items for the Church Calendar must be received by email by noon Tuesday to news@paducahsun.com. No handwritten announcements, please. Put Church Calendar in the subject line. Include the name, location, physical address, date, and time of the event, along with the phone number and name for contact information.

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9 Lb.	18 Lb. Pork Steak or Pork Roast
9 Lb.	18 Lb. Pork Cutlets or Pork Patties
10 Lb.	20 Lb. Country Style Ribs
4.5 Lb.	9 Lb. Platter Sliced Bacon
7.5 Lb.	15 Lb. Pork Sausage
2.5 Lb.	5 Lb. Minute Steaks
10 Lb.	20 Lb. Whole Fryers or 8-pc Cut-Up Fryers
20 Lb.	40 Lb. Chicken Leg Quarters (4 Pk)
5 Lb.	10 Lb. Breaded Chicken Strips (5 Lb. Pk)
5 Lb.	10 Lb. Breaded Chicken Patties
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0150 GARAGE / ESTATE SALES

VFW Indoor Yard sale June 5th, 6th, & 7th. Hours are 7:30am to 5pm 1727 Washington Street. Proceeds to benefit veteran's programs.

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0900 LEGALS

Public Notice Notice is hereby given that Paducah & Louisville Railway, Inc. has filed an application with the Energy and Environment Cabinet to replace the railroad bridge at Mile 231.4. The site is located south of Paducah, KY just west of Husband Road and spans the Blizard Ponds Drainage Canal. Any comments or objections can be submitted via email to: DOWFloodplain@ky.gov Kentucky Division of Water, Floodplain Management Section, 300 Sower Blvd. Frankfort, KY 40601. Call 502-564-3410 with questions.

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