

Sermon Title: **“Peace with Justice Sunday”**

Bible: **Genesis 1:31 & Matthew 28:16-20**

Where & When: at Gilroy UMC on Sunday, June 7, 2020

Audience: about 25 YouTube Live-streaming viewers

Opening Prayer

God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, you created this world, and all of us. It was very good. Now you call us as your co-creators for God’s Kingdom. Please help us to open our eyes, ears, and mouths. Please be with my lips in your love and grace. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

1. What is Peace with Justice Sunday?

Today is the first Sunday after Pentecost. Many of the United Methodist churches observe this Sunday as “Peace with Justice Sunday.” “Peace with Justice” comes from Shalom in the Bible. Shalom means not only peace, but also justice. That’s because there is no shalom without justice in the Bible. Peace, based on the oppression of others, is not shalom at all. There is no peace without justice. Peace with Justice Sunday reminds us of God’s demand for a faithful, just, disarmed, and secure world. How can we make shalom visible and active in people’s lives and communities?

2. 1992 Los Angeles Riots

28 years ago, there were the 1992 Los Angeles Riots. Unfortunately, it was another similar story of what we have experienced over so many years. To make a long story short, the 1992 Los Angeles Riots had a terrible effect on Korean American Communities and Korean American Churches in the States. Half of the total damage of over \$1 billion was sustained by Koreatown in Los Angeles. Somehow, because of social injustice, two minority groups suffered: Black communities could not help but express their anger and frustrations, and a great deal of damage and fear was caused in Korean-American communities. This experience has changed a lot in how Korean communities see society and social justice. The first thing that the

Korean-American community learned is that there were some people who took advantage of the riots, or even the peaceful protests. So Korean-Americans need to protect themselves, while building a system of peace and safety. The second thing that the Korean-American community realized is that Black lives matter to Korean-American communities, because we are all connected, and suffer together. I learned that it used to be very unusual to see Asian people join the peaceful protests of Black Lives Matter. Now, more Korean-Americans and Asian-Americans have joined the peaceful protests for Black Lives Matter. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "The riot is the language of the unheard." Thankfully, the Korean-American Community listened to the language of the unheard, beyond their own personal and communal damage and the trauma of the 1992 Los Angeles Riots.

3. God's Kingdom & Shalom: Individual Salvation and Social Salvation

How about Korean-American Churches? As you might know, Korean Christians are very passionate. We love God and the church. We love to sing songs, pray aloud, and eat together a lot. Many Korean Christians thought that it was enough to enjoy our own individual salvation, while closing our eyes to the suffering of others and social injustice. Many Korean Christians realize that living a nice or good Christian life does not automatically translate to nice or good communities in society. God's Kingdom, God's Shalom, is not only for individuals but also for society. This does not mean that Christians have to make others Christians, or make the city or the nation into a Christian city or nation. Of course, I will be very joyful to welcome more new Christians, especially more new Methodists. However, what it means is that we can give others and society a taste of God's Kingdom in their lives and communities. We can share God's

Shalom, God's peace with justice. Actually, God's peace with justice will be overflowing, through us and our churches, up to those whom we meet, and into our society where we live. In other words, God wants to save us, and our society as well, because God so loved the world (John 3:16). As much as God cares for us, God cares for our society where we live.

4. "Moral Man and Immoral Society" by Reinhold Niebuhr

You might have many questions about my message. So, I would like to share one book that I learned from in a Christian Ethics class: "Moral Man and Immoral Society." This book was published in 1932 by Reinhold Niebuhr, an American Protestant Theologian. As the title of the book represents, the author's study is easy to understand, but somewhat hard to digest. I know many good Koreans. Sometimes, I wonder why Korea, the Country, is not that good. Likewise, everyday, I have met many good Americans. Sometimes, I wonder if the USA could be at least as good as those good Americans that I have met so far. I have met many good Christians here and there. But sometimes, I wonder why the church is not as good as we are. Then, as a Christian, what should I do for a better society? Does God guide me to be a better Christian only? Or does God not call me to change the world? The first greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind. (Matthew 22:37) And the second commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Matthew 22:39) What does it mean to love our neighbor in an immoral society? How can we love others, if there is social injustice?

5. God's Creation & Jesus' Great Commission

Today's Scripture Readings come from the lectionary. The reading of Genesis is about God's creation. The Gospel reading of Matthew is about our mission of the church: to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. The biggest difference between God's Creation and Jesus' Great Commission is that Jesus needs us. When God created heaven and earth, God created the world by Godself. God is absolutely powerful. But for Jesus' great commission, Jesus calls us as his disciples. Jesus wants to transform the world together with us. Patiently and gently, Jesus calls us. This might be how Jesus' love is. Sometimes, we feel like we are in the storm of out of control, frustration, ignorance, anger, or suffering. Sometimes, it feels like we are turning back. However, I believe that this feeling is the evidence that we pray together, we suffer together, and we transform the world together. It might be how God's Shalom spreads out to us and the world. So, I see a hope in this spiral movement of God's Shalom. There is God's Shalom, peace with justice, in us and with us. Hopefully and thankfully, Gilroy is one of many places where there has been peaceful protest. I share one YouTube video, <https://youtu.be/YbEXvg2RrCg> On this Peace with Justice Sunday, I believe that Black Lives Matter to God. So, Black Lives Matter to me. How about you?

Closing Prayer

Gracious God, please guide us to open our eyes, ears, and mouths. As we need you, oh Lord, our community and our nation need you. We need your peace, your justice, and your healing. Please use us for your Shalom, to transform the world. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Questions.

1. What is Shalom to you? Peace? Peace with Justice?
2. What do you think of the concept, "Moral Man and Immoral Society?"
3. How can we make Shalom visible and active in people's lives and communities?