



theme: Worship – Bloody Hands (Isaiah 1:1-31)
materials: Red paint, paint brushes, paper, bible

What social justice/action issues should matter most to us? How is social action and salvation linked? Should we only serve people in order to see them become Christians? What should we think about partnerships between government and religion? What social needs do you see around you? To what form of social action might God be calling you?

welcome

Define “Justice”. Does it, or can it mean different things to different people, in different circumstances? Can you think of a distinct moment when you have experienced either justice or injustice?

interact

Paint your hands red, and then place the imprint of your hand on pieces of paper. Around each of the hand prints write down the injustices you can think of in your community, your city, your nation, or your world. Bring all of these things before God in prayer, but do not wash the paint off your hands.

read

Read Isaiah 1:1-31 together.

What jumps out at you from this reading? Are there any familiar passages?

Why is God angry with Israel in this passage? Why would he not accept their sacrifices or festivals as worship, and why would he not listen to their prayers?

Why are their hands described as “bloody”?

What are some of the injustices described in this passage? (Verse 23)

What kind of society results when these injustices are allowed to flourish?

Has anything changed today? Is our society in danger of the same judgement as Israel received? In other words, are our hands bloody?

Do you have to be the person receiving the bribe in order to have bloody hands? To what degree are we responsible for the injustice around us?

What can we do about bloody hands?

think

Early Christians said that if a person starves to death and Christians have food in their cupboards, they are guilty of murder. If a person has no clothes and Christians have extra clothes, or if a person has no money and Christians have money in their banks, they are guilty of theft.

Let's consider our responsibility for these things. How bloody are our hands?

Read Isaiah 1:15-18 again.

Bring our society's sins before God again, repenting of them and then wash your hands together. How must our behaviour change in order to show true repentance?



live & pray

Do some research into the products you use regularly. Is your chocolate made by trafficked slaves? Are your shoes made in sweatshops? Check them out on the internet, and start writing letters or getting involved in movements to redress these injustices. Don't let comfort or ignorance bloody up your hands.

useful resources

Book: *Night*, by Elie Wiesel

Movie: *Blood Diamond*

leader's guide

God is upset with Israel because they were not living out justice in the land. Their leaders were stealing, were accepting bribes and not giving fair trials, and no one was doing anything about it. God would not accept their worship or prayers while this situation continued to exist. They could not properly say they were loving and serving God while they were abusing their neighbours. Their hands were bloody not necessarily because they had done any killing, but because their actions (or inaction in the face of injustice) would lead to the death of other people.

A society where these activities flourish is one in which no one can trust anyone else, in which true justice is not served, and where the poor are taken advantage of in every situation.

Not doing something about the injustice that we see leaves us every bit as much responsible as doing the injustice itself. Evil succeeds when good people do nothing.