



# The Valley Voice

*Buffalo Run, Fillmore and Valley View*

*The United Methodist Churches of the Buffalo Run Charge*

*“One Congregation Serving the Community and Worshiping in Three Locations”*

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## With Liberty and Justice for All ...

“Dad he hit me; he’s throwing paper at me.” She’s on my side of the seat.” “He stuck his tongue out at me.” These are some of the pleas for justice that rang out from the back seat of the ‘65 Oldsmobile when we were kids.

The judgment levied from the driver’s seat was always final. “If I have to stop this car you will all get spanked.” Naturally, we thought that the judgment was not fair.

These are among my first memories of experiences with justice, and as I reflect on them, I think Dad knew more about justice than we gave him credit for. Dad knew that there were innocent by-standers in the back seat, what one did to start, the others fueled the fires of unrest, and the pleas for justice from the back seat were merely attempts to get what we wanted or see the others get some sentence of punishment.

Our forefathers knew the importance of peace with justice as they gathered to put forth the

Constitution governing our nation. “We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ensure domestic tranquility... .”

Recently I have been immersed in the scripture and study of the whole image of peace with



justice and have discovered some things.

Peace does not abide apart from justice; the pursuit of justice leads to peace and both reside in the nature of God and are given to us by grace in the indwelling presence of the Spirit.

One of the more shocking discoveries I’ve made is the difference of the biblical understanding of justice and our cultural misunderstanding of justice.

For the most part, I believe our world attitude seems not too distant from my childhood perspective from the back seat. Justice means getting even, making someone pay, or if you don’t agree with me, I will make things hard on you.

On the other hand, the biblical image of justice and righteousness are essentially the same. Justice is about doing the right thing, the moral and ethical decision from God’s perspective. Largely the Bible records the ongoing struggle over justice. Job struggles over justice in the

midst of losing loved ones and all his worldly wealth. In Psalm 73, Asaph struggles over the justice in seeing the unrighteous get rich while the righteous barely have enough to get by.

Any of this sound familiar?

Scripture say's God is just, and Jesus is the exact representation of God, so the true image of justice is in Christ, the righteous judge. Several years ago, the Christian craze was WWJD, What Would Jesus Do. I can think of no better question to pose in the decisions we make regarding our lives, our actions and our relationships than WWJD. When we ask WWJD, we are asking what is the right thing to do. Then our decisions are focused on the moral, ethical, righteous choice. This one question holds the power to transform our lives, our families, our churches, our nation and our world.

Should I go to worship today? WWJD.

Do I need to forgive some one? WWJD.

Apply WWJD to any choice you face and a new perspective emerges.

The problem is that when we ask WWJD all too often we ignore the answer. Most of us know the biblical standards for relationships, unity in the church, giving of our time and money, yet we base our decisions on our way, what I like or want; more than on an attitude of righteousness that offers mercy, promotes unity, cooperation, and love.

A word of caution at this point, you might be reading this and thinking, "I'm going to send this to so and so. They really need to learn this."

Admit it. We all do this. In that thought, we have taken the role of righteous judge belonging only to Christ. WWJD and ethical decisions are to be used in the context of our decisions personally or as a group facing an issue. I guess the times we choose to ignore the righteous choice we are trusting in the forgiving nature of Christ, but John 16:8 says:

***"And when Christ comes, he will convict the world concerning sin, righteousness and judgment.. ."***

I find more troubling the prospect of standing in the presence of Christ with His nail-scarred hands and having to account for the times I knew WWJD and chose to ignore than the times I failed in ignorance.

Peace with justice?

Do you fine your life and world around you filled with conflict, anxiety and stress?

If we would give honest reflection into the situation, most times we will find a string of ignored WWJD questions. Be encouraged. It is possible to make the right choices. Justice / righteous are within our grasp. In accepting Christ as Lord, the righteousness of Christ's sacrifice is imparted to us. Through surrender to the indwelling Spirit and the government of God's word, we can be continually renewed in righteousness of character and conduct.

***"... Be filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."*** Philippians 1:11

***"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied."*** Matthew 5:6

***"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."*** Matthew 6:33

Peace and Righteousness be ours,

Pastor Duane