The basic meaning of righteousness... denotes not so much the abstract idea of justice or virtue, as right standing and consequent right behavior, within a community. ~N.T. Wright

Rectifying justice (*mishpat*) means punishing wrongdoers and caring for the victims of unjust treatment. Primary justice (*tzadeqah*) is behavior that if it was prevalent in the world, would render rectifying justice unnecessary. In the Bible, *tzadeqah* refers to day-to-day living in which a person conducts all relationships in family and society with fairness, generosity, and equity. ~Tim Keller

The narrow ridge is the meeting place of the We. This is where man can meet man in community. And only men who are capable of truly saying 'Thou' to one another can truly say 'We' with one another. If each guards the narrow ridge within himself and keeps it intact, this meeting can take place. ~Martin Buber

It is not enough for the Church to be engaged with the State in healing social ills, though this is important at times. But when the world can turn around and see a group of God's people exhibiting substantial healing in the area of human relationships in their present life, then the world will take notice. Each group of Christians is, as it were, a pilot plant, showing that something can be done in the present situation, if only we begin in the right way. ~Francis Schaeffer

There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations, these are mortal, and their life is to ours as the life of a gnat. It is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit. ~C.S. Lewis

The load, or weight, or burden of my neighbor's glory should be laid daily on my back, a load so heavy that only humility can carry it, and the backs of the proud will be broken... This does not mean that we are to be perpetually solemn. We must play. But our merriment must be of that kind (and it is, in fact the merriest kind) which exists between people who have, from the outset, taken each other seriously – no flippancy, no superiority, no presumption. And our charity must be a real and costly love, with deep feeling for the sins in spite of which we love the sinner – no mere tolerance or indulgence which parodies love as flippancy parodies merriment..." ~C.S. Lewis

If, indeed, there is hope or an imaginable prospect for human flourishing in the contemporary world, it begins when the word of shalom becomes flesh in us and is enacted through us towards those with whom we live, in the tasks we are given, and in the spheres of influence we operate. ~James Davison Hunter
**Scriptures**

**Genesis 1:26** – Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

**Romans 5:6-10** – “For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die—but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life.”

**Romans 7:21** – “So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand.”

**Proverbs 11:10** – “When the righteous prosper, the city rejoices.”

**Amos 5:24** – “But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.”

**Zechariah 7:9-10** – “Thus says the Lord of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress the widow, the fatherless, the sojourner, or the poor, and let none of you devise evil against another in your heart.”

**Romans 12:15-18** – “Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.”

**Micah 6:8** – “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?”

**Matthew 25:35-36, 40** – “I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me...Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

**Discussion & Reflection**

1. What are some obstacles in our daily/weekly routines that helped or hindered the cultivation of justice? Specifically, how has technology shaped our contemporary notions of community and neighbor? Explain.

2. We all *have* neighbors but the Gospel requires us to *be* a neighbor. The Good Samaritan shows us how and Jesus says this is the example we are to follow. What boundaries have you constructed in your own life to separate you from the other? Who is that other in your life and why? Who is the stranger? Who is your neighbor? What if they are the same person?

3. How has this evening’s conversation on justice been relevant for living in this Christian college community? For those with leadership roles and responsibilities in our campus community?

4. How might we confront injustices in our academics? Think about a new course that could be offered or a current course that could be re-designed in your discipline. What community issue/problem would you like to address? How could you use your gifts and disciplinary knowledge to serve the elderly, homeless, poor, etc.?

5. How can you cultivate a deeper awareness of what you bring personally, both good and bad, when you address issues of justice?

6. In the second extended Lewis quote, how can the Church’s outreach in activism avoid the pitfalls he describes?
A Litany of Thanksgiving

Let us give thanks to God our Father for all his gifts so freely bestowed upon us:
For the beauty and wonder of your creation, in earth and sky and sea.

We thank you, Lord.

For all that is gracious in the lives of men and women, revealing the image of Christ.

We thank you, Lord.

For our daily food and drink, our homes and families, and our friends,

We thank you, Lord.

For minds to think, and hearts to love, and hands to serve,

We thank you Lord.

For health and strength to work, and leisure to rest and play,

We thank you, Lord.

For the brave and courageous, who are patient in suffering and faithful in adversity,

We thank you, Lord.

For all valiant seekers after truth, liberty, and justice,

We thank you, Lord.

For the communion of saints, in all times and places,

We thank you, Lord.

Above all, we give you thanks for the great mercies and promises given to us in Christ Jesus our Lord; To him be praise and glory, with you, O Father, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.
Selections from the Screwtape Letters

“In his anguish, the patient can, of course, be encouraged to revenge himself by some vindictive feelings directed towards the German leaders, and that is good so far as it goes. But it is usually a sort of melodramatic or mythical hatred directed against imaginary scapegoats. He has never met these people in real life – they are lay figures modeled on what he gets from newspapers. The results of such fanciful hatred are often most disappointing, and of all humans the English are in this respect the most deplorable milksops. They are creatures of that miserable sort who loudly proclaim that torture is too good for their enemies and then give tea and cigarettes to the first wounded German pilot who turns up at the back door. Do what you will, there is going to be some benevolence, as well as some malice, in your patient’s soul. The great thing is to direct the malice to his immediate neighbors whom he meets every day and to thrust his benevolence out to the remote circumference, to people he does not know. The malice thus becomes wholly real and the benevolence largely imaginary. There is no good at all in inflaming his hatred of Germans if, at the same time, a pernicious habit of charity is growing up between him and his mother, his employer, and the man he meets in the train. Think of your man as a series of concentric circles, his will being the innermost, his intellect coming next, and finally his fantasy. You can hardly hope, at once, to exclude from all the circles everything that smells of the Enemy: but you must keep on shoving all the virtues outward till they are finally located in the circle of fantasy, and all the desirable qualities inward into the Will. It is only in so far as they reach the will and are there embodied in habits that the virtues are really fatal to us. (I don’t, of course, mean what the patient mistakes for his will, the conscious fume and fret of resolutions and clenched teeth, but the real center, what the Enemy calls the Heart.) All sorts of virtues painted in the fantasy or approved by the intellect or even, in some measure, loved and admired, will not keep a man from Our Father’s house: indeed they may make him more amusing when he gets there.”

“Some ages are lukewarm and complacent, and then it is our business to soothe them yet faster asleep. Other ages, of which the present is one, are unbalanced and prone to faction, and it is our business to inflame them. Any small coterie, bound together by some interest which other men dislike or ignore, tends to develop inside itself a hothouse mutual admiration, and towards the outer world, a great deal of pride and hatred which is entertained without shame because the “Cause” is its sponsor and it is thought to be impersonal. Even when the little group exists originally for the Enemy’s own purposes, this remains true. We want the Church to be small not only that fewer men may know the Enemy but also that those who do may acquire the uneasy intensity and the defensive self-righteousness of a secret society or a clique... Whichever he adopts, your main task will be the same. Let him begin by treating the Patriotism or the Pacifism as a part of his religion. Then let him, under the influence of partisan spirit, come to regard it as the most important part. Then quietly and gradually nurse him on to the stage at which the religion becomes merely part of the “Cause,” in which Christianity is valued chiefly because of the excellent arguments it can produce... The attitude which you want to guard against is that in which temporal affairs are treated primarily as material for obedience. Once you have made the World an end, and faith a means, you have almost won your man, and it makes very little difference what kind of worldly end he is pursuing. Provided that meetings, pamphlets, policies, movements, causes, and crusades, matter more to him than prayers and sacraments and charity, he is ours – and the more “religious” (on those terms), the more securely ours. I could show you a pretty cageful down here.”