

**First church of Winthrop**  
**5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**  
**07/13<sup>th</sup>/2025**  
**Pastor: Ali Wantimba**

Psalm 82

Luke 10:25–37

**Sermon Title: What Does God Require of Us?**

**Opening Prayer: Gracious and Just God,**

We gather in Your presence this day, grateful for Your love that sees the wounded, your mercy that stops for the broken, and Your justice that lifts the oppressed. Speak to us through Your Word. Challenge our complacency, disturb our indifference, and stir within us a holy compassion for our neighbors. Open our eyes to see the suffering around us, our ears to hear the cries of the weak, and our hearts to respond with courage and mercy. As we worship You, make us more like Christ— ready to love, willing to serve, and eager to cross the road for the sake of another. In the name of Jesus, our Savior and Neighbor, we pray.

**Amen.**

In today's texts, we are invited into two sacred conversations:

1. **In Psalm 82**, God confronts unjust rulers and declares His demand for justice on behalf of the weak and the poor.
2. **In Luke 10**, Jesus invites us into a parable that redefines what it means to love our neighbor.

These two Scriptures—though from vastly different genres and centuries—speak with **one prophetic voice**: God desires a people who live out **justice and mercy** in the world.

**In Psalm 82: God Confronts the Powerful.** In Verse 1: “God has taken his place in the divine council; in the midst of the gods, he holds judgment.” This verse sets the dramatic stage. God appears as the supreme judge, standing in the assembly of "gods. He presents the image of **accountability** to the earthly judges and rulers who have failed to uphold justice. This psalm is a **courtroom scene** in which God accuses the earthly rulers—those responsible for justice—with a **serious indictment**:

**Verses 2–4: “How long will you judge unjustly and show partiality to the wicked?”** He, God then, **issues His charge**. “Give justice to the weak and the orphan; maintain the right of the lowly and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.” God asks this question to demonstrate what just means. According to God justice involves: A society where the vulnerable are protected, the orphan and widow are lifted, and evil is restrained, not empowered. The **"how long"** in verse 2 echoes the lament of the prophets. It's

a divine protest. As prophet Amos lamented (How long will the systems of power remain corrupted?)

In Verse 5: “They have neither knowledge nor understanding, they walk around in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.” Because of injustice, the very **moral and social order of creation** is destabilized. When leaders neglect the vulnerable, **the earth trembles**—families break down, violence increases, hope withers. This verse reveals a key biblical principle: **Injustice is not just a political issue; it's a spiritual crisis. Because it is against the principles of God.**

**Transition to Luke 10:25–37:** Psalm 82 focuses on **corporate justice** and accountability. Luke 10 shifts to **individual responsibility** and personal ethics. Together, they teach us that, God holds both **systems** and **people** accountable for how they treat others—especially the weak and the wounded.

### **Justice and Neighbor-Love Today: What is Justice?**

Justice is not a suggestion or an extra activity for the religiously motivated. It is central to **God's character** and **God's covenant with His people**. We often think of justice as legal or institutional—but in biblical terms, **justice is relational**. It's about protecting the vulnerable and **restoring equity** where power has been abused.

Psalm 82 and Luke 10 **call us** to a **full-bodied faith** that includes: **Seeing Clearly like in how** Luke 10 shows **the Samaritan seeing** the man's suffering. **Will we see the brokenness around us—or will we look away?**

**Acting Justly like how** The Samaritan offers **justice through mercy**—practical help, not just sentiment. “**Faith without action is dead**” (James 2:17).

**Loving Boldly;** True neighbor-love is **risky, sacrificial, and expansive**. The Samaritan crosses **social, ethnic, and religious boundaries**. **Do we only love those like us—or all whom God puts in our path?**

If we call ourselves children of God, then we must care about what God cares about. Psalm 82 calls us to: **How?**

- **Speak up** for those who have no voice.
- **Challenge systems** that oppress the poor and protect the powerful.
- **Hold ourselves** accountable for how we steward our own influence.

**“Go and Do Likewise”:** We live in a world that still leaves people beaten on the roadside. Some are victims of injustice—racism, poverty, violence, exclusion. Others are just

overwhelmed—lonely, anxious, addicted, or afraid. And the question is not just “**Who is my neighbor?**” Jesus flips it: **Will you be a neighbor?**

Now, people of God, let us be people who:

- Love God fully,
- Love others compassionately,
- And serve our neighbor boldly.

It is not enough to be religious (like the priest and Levite). It is not enough to know Scripture (like the lawyer). The true measure of faith is whether we **love others with justice and mercy**. God is not impressed by religion that stays safe. God honors **faith that sees and acts**—that crosses the road, gives sacrificially, and loves courageously. **The question is no longer about defining others—it’s about defining yourself.**

Will you be a neighbor to the person in need?

**Closing Prayer: Holy and Compassionate God**, we thank You for meeting us in worship and speaking through Your Word. You have reminded us of Your call to justice, your command to love, and Your example of mercy. As we go from this place, open our eyes to the needs around us, give us hearts ready to serve, and hands willing to help. Help us to be neighbors to all—crossing boundaries, showing mercy, and seeking justice. Let our lives reflect the love of Christ in all we do. In the name of Jesus, our Savior and Guide, we pray.  
**Amen.**

## **Offertory Prayer**

**Generous and Just God**, All that we have is a gift from You.  
As we bring these offerings, we return a portion of what You have entrusted to us.

Use these gifts to lift the lowly, heal the hurting,  
and extend mercy to those in need.  
Let them be tools of justice and acts of neighborly love  
in a world longing for hope and healing.

May our giving reflect the heart of Christ,  
who crossed every boundary to love and serve.  
In His holy name we pray,  
**Amen.**

**Benediction:** Go now into the world, not as people who walk past the suffering, but as those who see and stop. Go as agents of God's justice, as vessels of His mercy, and as neighbors to all in need. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.