

AUSTRALIANS
TOGETHER

God's heart for Indigenous people

FOUR INTRODUCTORY SERMONS TO EXPLORE
INDIGENOUS INJUSTICE IN AUSTRALIA

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About this resource

We believe churches have a unique role to play in ending the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. We've developed four sermons to help your church start a conversation about the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

These four sermons share a single purpose and message - to help churches understand the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and to explore why Christ followers in Australia should care. However, each sermon takes a slightly different approach to this message, giving you the option to choose the message that best suits your congregation.

Each sermon includes a dot point summary, as well as a full transcript, providing you as much or as little direction as you like. This resource also includes support videos and slide presentations, available for download from our website when you sign up for Group Leader Access <insert link>.

SERMON OVERVIEWS

Option 1. The Heart of God	"Learn to do right; seek justice." What does this look like in modern day Australia?
Option 2. Part of a Bigger Story	God has reconciled us to himself through Jesus' death on the Cross. Now, as his ambassadors, what's our role in a bigger story of reconciliation in the contemporary Australian context?
Option 3. Prosperity, Privilege and Poverty	What do prosperity, poverty and privilege mean in Australia, and what does this mean for us as Christ followers in Australia today?
Option 4. Blindspot	Is the injustice faced by Indigenous Australians a blindspot for us as Christ followers living in Australia today? What does this situation require of us?

SUPPORT RESOURCE LINKS

For each outline point there is a corresponding icon that refers to a quote, Scripture reference, image or video link. This content is detailed in the pages following each outline and is available for inclusion in a Powerpoint or presentation.

ICON KEY



Quote



Video



Scripture










Image

Option 1: The heart of God

SUMMARY




Isaiah 1:17 says we're to "Learn to do right; seek justice." What does that look like in the context of modern day Australia, especially as it relates to Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians? We consider the beginning of our shared story, as well as the stories of modern day Indigenous brothers and sisters in Christ, and ask what the Scriptures say about the heart of God for justice that can help us live as those who reflect him within our society.


OUTLINE


1. Isaiah 1:17 – "Learn to do right; seek justice." We are to learn to do right – it doesn't just come naturally. 
2. There's a strong connection between the concepts of righteousness and justice – and God's heart is for both.
3. There's a significant gap in the well-being indicators of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, and this is a justice issue. 
4. Summary of the early years of the shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.  + 
5. Various scriptures paint a picture for us of God's heart for justice – Ps 146:6-9; Mic 6:8; Is 9:7; Ps 140:12; Prov 21:3; Amos 5:24; Jer 50:7. 
6. Righteousness doesn't just relate to our own personal moral code – it should extend into society.
7. Stories from Indigenous Australians, Rev. Graham Paulson and his wife Iris. 
8. The parallels between the dispersed early church leaders and Indigenous church leaders, to understand and relate to each other more supportively. 
9. We can seek to listen, learn, pray and build relationships with Indigenous Australians in the midst of the injustice they still face. 


Option 1: The heart of God


SUPPORT RESOURCES


1.  Isaiah 1:17 "Learn to do right; seek justice."
2. -
3.  Gap statistics. View [here](#).
4.  Indigenous language nations map. Download [here](#).

 The Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, an English missionary who came to Australia in the early 1800s, said -
"It was maintained by many of the colony that the blacks had no language at all but were only a race of the monkey tribe. This was a convenient assumption, for if it could be proved that the Aborigines . . . were only a species of wild beasts, there could be no guilt attributed to those who shot them off or poisoned them."

 In the Sydney Herald on the 5th October 1838 -
'[The Indigenous people are] the most degenerate, despicable and brutal race of beings in existence, and stand as it were in scorn 'to shame creation'- a scoff and a jest upon humanity. They are insensible to every bond which binds man to his friend: husband to wife, parent to its child or creature to its God. They stand unprecedented in the annals of the most ancient and barbarous histories for the anti-civilising propensities they put forth.'

 December 1838 -
'I look on the blacks as a set of monkeys, and the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better. I would never consent to hang a white man for a black one. (And referring to a particular court case at the time) - I knew well (the settlers) were guilty of the murder, but I for one would never see a white man suffer for shooting a black.'

5.  **Psalm 146:6-9** *He is the Maker of heaven and earth, the sea, and everything in them - He remains faithful forever. He upholds the cause of the oppressed and gives food to the hungry. The Lord sets prisoners free,*

 **Micah 6:8** *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy And to walk humbly with your God*

 **Proverbs 21:3** *To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice*

 **Amos 5:24** *Let justice run down like water, and righteousness like a mighty stream*



 **Jeremiah 50:7** *The Lord, the habitation of justice*


 **Isaiah 9:7; Psalm 140:12**

Option 1: The heart of God

SUPPORT RESOURCES

6. -

7.  Aunty Iris - Losing home. View [here](#).
 Aunty Iris - Stolen wages. View [here](#).

8.  Christian Indigenous consultant Stuart Philpot:

“So the question becomes how do mainstream Christians support the Aboriginal Christian leaders of these small dispersed congregations and thus strengthen them and hold them? For their road is not one we can walk.”

“I think the answer lies in early church history. The situation of the Aboriginal Church leaders is analogous to the leaders of the small Christian communities around the Mediterranean and the distances between those communities and remote Aboriginal communities are similar.”

“Therefore the practice of Peter and Paul in the First and Second Centuries has some lessons for us in Australia today.”












9.  Listen Learn Live graphic. Download [here](#).

Option 2: Part of a bigger story

SUMMARY

When sin entered the world in the garden, it created brokenness in our relationships with God, with each other, with the environment and with our true identity. Jesus' death and resurrection, though, has broken the power of sin, and he is ushering in the kingdom of God to its fulfilment, when all things in the new earth will be fully reconciled to God again and brought to wholeness. As his ambassadors, we need to consider what role we have to play in that bigger story of reconciliation, within the context of contemporary Australia, and especially as it relates to the shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

OUTLINE


1. We're part of a big story, that starts in a garden and ends in a city.
2. In the garden, every thing was good and whole – we had right relationship with God, with each other, with the environment and with our true identity. When sin entered the world, it caused brokenness in all these relationships. 
3. Jesus' victory over death and sin is the power that allows us to move from our broken state, to the moment when all will be made new in the new heaven and the new earth (Rev 21:1-7). 
4. As Jesus' hands and feet, we're meant to be a part of outworking that wholeness and reconciliation on the earth now, that extension of the kingdom in this time of the now and not yet. 
5. We need to consider where we're situated within that story, especially as it relates to Indigenous and non-Indigenous shared history in Australia today. 
6. Summary of the early years of Indigenous and non-Indigenous shared history. 
7. The current gap in wellbeing indicators between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. 
8. The brokenness that started in the garden is still very much at work in our land today, demonstrated in brokenness at all levels.
9. 2 Cor 5:17-21 – through Christ, we're given the ministry of reconciliation. 
10. 3 ideas about what it might look like to move the story forward – Listen, Love God and Love Others, Seek Justice. 
11. Listen– James 1:9 – Quick to listen, slow to speak. 
12. Love God and Love Others – Matt 22:37-40. 
13. Seek Justice – Deut 32:4, Micah 6:8. God is a God of justice, and he requires us to act justly. 


Option 2: Part of a bigger story


SUPPORT RESOURCES

1. -


2.  **Genesis 1:31** *God saw all that He had made, and it was very good*


 **Romans 5:12** *Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned*


3.  **Revelation 21:1-7** *Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the old heaven and the old earth had disappeared.... And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven like a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, "Look, God's home is now among his people!... He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." And the one sitting on the throne said, "Look, I am making everything new!"*

4.  **2 Corinthians 5:19** *"...that God was reconciling the world to Himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation."*

5.  Indigenous language nations map. Download [here](#).

6.  The Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld, an English missionary who came to Australia in the early 1800s, said - *"It was maintained by many of the colony that the blacks had no language at all but were only a race of the monkey tribe. This was a convenient assumption, for if it could be proved that the Aborigines . . . were only a species of wild beasts, there could be no guilt attributed to those who shot them off or poisoned them."*

 In the Sydney Herald on the 5th October 1838 - *'[The Indigenous people are] the most degenerate, despicable and brutal race of beings in existence, and stand as it were in scorn 'to shame creation'- a scoff and a jest upon humanity. They are insensible to every bond which binds man to his friend: husband to wife, parent to its child or creature to its God. They stand unprecedented in the annals of the most ancient and barbarous histories for the anti-civilising propensities they put forth.'*


 December 1838 - *'I look on the blacks as a set of monkeys, and the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth the better. I would never consent to hang a white man for a black one. (And referring to a particular court case at the time) - I knew well (the settlers) were guilty of the murder, but I for one would never see a white man suffer for shooting a black.'*

7.  Gap statistics. View [here](#).

Option 2: Part of a bigger story


SUPPORT RESOURCES


8. -


9.  **2 Corinthians 5:17-21** *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them. And He has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.*

10.  Our backyard - Richard's story. View [here](#).

11.  **James 1:19** *"...Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak..."*

12.  **Matthew 22:35-40** *One of them, an expert in the law, tested Him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind! This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

13.  **Deuteronomy 32:4** *The Rock, His work is perfect, for all His ways are justice. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, just and upright is He.*

 **Micah 6:8** *He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy And to walk humbly with your God.*











Option 3:

Prosperity, privilege and poverty

SUMMARY

Throughout the Scriptures, God reveals his design for true human flourishing, and how it's to be outworked in community. Within this context, we explore the themes of poverty, prosperity and privilege, especially as they relate to the shared history and current context of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. We also consider how we, as followers of Christ, can learn from his example in taking steps forward to extend the shalom of God's true prosperity into our communities.


OUTLINE


1. What do prosperity, poverty and privilege mean in Australia today, and what does that mean for us as followers of Christ as it concerns the shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?  + 
2. What does the original design of Eden tell us about God's plan for human flourishing? 
3. What does true blessing look like? 
4. How does the current status of Indigenous wellbeing compare to God's design of shalom? 
5. What does God's design for the Israelite community tell us about God's heart for communities to prosper? How have we worked against that design in our shared history of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians?  +  +  + 
6. -
7. How does the example of Christ point us to the kind of posture we should take as his followers? 


Option 3:

Prosperity, privilege and poverty

SUPPORT RESOURCES


1.  1884 million people in the world lack access to safe water, and 3.5 million people die each year from water-related disease.


 **Romans 12:1** *(The Message)* So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life - your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering.

 **Matthew 5:13-16** *"Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God flavours of this earth. If you lose your saltiness, how will people taste godliness? You've lost your usefulness and will end up in the garbage.*


Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colours in the world. God is not a secret to be kept. We're going public with this, as public as a city on a hill. If I make you light-bearers, you don't think I'm going to hide you under a bucket, do you? I'm putting you on a light stand. Now that I've put you there on a hilltop, on a light stand—shine! Keep open house; be generous with your lives.


2.  **Genesis 1:26** *Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness..."*


 **Genesis 1:28-30** *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; ...God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is on the surface of all the earth, and every tree which has fruit yielding seed; it shall be food for you; and to every beast of the earth and to every bird of the sky and to every thing that moves on the earth which has life, I have given every green plant for food"; and it was so.*

3.  **Genesis 12:2** *And I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, and so you shall be a blessing.*

4.  Gap statistics. View [here](#).

 **Ezekiel 16:49** *"Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy"*


 Indigenous language nations map. Download [here](#).


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Option 3:

Prosperity, privilege and poverty


SUPPORT RESOURCES


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 Aunty Iris - Stolen wages. View [here](#).

5. -

6.  **Matthew 22:35-40** One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"
Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."








 **Phillipians 2:3-7** Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to His own advantage; rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant,

Option 4: **Blindspot**

SUMMARY


In Luke 16:19-31, Jesus tells a parable about a rich man, and a beggar named Lazarus. Even though Lazarus lived outside the rich man's house, the rich man had a blind spot when it came to Lazarus and his plight; he didn't consider whether this injustice required anything of him. Is the injustice faced by Indigenous Australians a blindspot for us as Christ followers living in Australia today? What does this situation require of us?

OUTLINE

1. Luke 16:19-31 - The rich man had a blindspot when it came to the injustice at his front door. Even though Lazarus was right there, every day, the rich man didn't consider whether this injustice required anything of him. 
2. Is the injustice faced by Indigenous Australians a blindspot for us as Christ followers living in Australia today? 
3. God's heart is to see justice for the powerless, for those forgotten by society: Job 5:15-16, 1 Sam 2:8, Ps 113:7-8, Ps 11:7, Prov 29:7, Isa 61:8, Micah 6:7, 8. 
4. In the Old Testament Israel were then sent into exile because of two major sins: idolatry - they forgot their God, and injustice - they forgot their neighbour.
5. One way we can open our eyes to the injustice in our own nation is to listen to the stories of our Indigenous brothers and sisters. 
6. How could we respond to the situation in our own back yard? Indigenous Manbarra and Nywaigi man, Richard Cassidy, urges us to take a risk (Matt 13:44-46), walk with each other (Psalm 133:1, Rom 12:18, 2 Cor 13:11, 1 Tim 6:18, Col 3:12), and understand it's the spirit that brings true healing.  + 
7. We can't afford to shut our eyes. We can't afford to be like the rich man. We must ask if the situation in Australia requires anything of us (Ps. 139:23-24). 

Option 4: **Blindspot**

SUPPORT RESOURCES

1.  **Luke 16:19-31** *"There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.*


The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'


"But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'" He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'


"Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

"No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'" He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

2.  Gap statistics. View [here](#).

3.  **Job 5:15-16** *He saves the needy from the sword in their mouth; He saves them from the clutches of the powerful. So the poor have hope, and injustice shuts its mouth.*


 **1 Samuel 2:8** *"He raises the poor from the dust, He lifts the needy from the ash heap To make them sit with nobles, And inherit a seat of honour; For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, And He set the world on them.*

 **Psalms 113:7-8** *He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; He seats them with princes, with the princes of His people.*

4. -


5.  Ruth's story - Separation. View [here](#).

6.  Our backyard - Richard's story. View [here](#).

 **Matthew 13:44-46** *"The kingdom of heaven is like this. A man happens to find a treasure hidden in a field. He covers it up again, and is so happy that he goes and sells everything he has, and then goes back and buys that field. Also, the kingdom of heaven is like this. A man is looking for fine pearls, and when he finds one that is unusually fine, he goes and sells everything he has, and buys that pearl."*


Option 4: **Blindspot**

SUPPORT RESOURCES


 **Psalm 133:1** *"See how good and pleasing it is for brothers to be living together in harmony!"*


 **John 13:34** *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another"*

 **Romans 12:18** *"If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."*

 **2 Corinthians 13:11** *"Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you."*

 **1 Timothy 6:18** *"do good, having wealth in good works, being quick to give, taking part with one another"*

 **Colossians 3:12** *"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience"*

7.  **Psalm 139:23-24** *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test my thoughts. Point out anything You find in me that makes You sad, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."*

Where to from here

We believe that respectful relationships and connections between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians can address Indigenous injustice in our nation. That's why we're passionate about ending the disconnect between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, so that together, we can approach the entrenched problems facing Indigenous Australians. Coming together for a better future starts when we:

- › ***Understand the wrongs of the past and acknowledge their ongoing effects.***
- › ***Value Indigenous people, histories and cultures as part of our shared national identity.***
- › ***Respect Indigenous people and cultures, recognising their inherent worth and dignity.***

We know everyone can be part of creating change. The first step is a commitment to Listen Learn Live. How can your church commit to Listen Learn Live?

SHARING OUR STORY

Sharing Our Story is a free four part video resource designed to help church small groups understand the shared story of Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians. The video resource is supported by an extensive Leader's Guide, Biblical devotions and promotional material. Running this resource in you church small groups is the best place for your congregation to get started.

WEBSITE

The Australians Together website is a hub of information about our shared story. The site is specifically designed to help you listen to the stories of Indigenous people and learn about historical events and policies as well as current facts, stats and issues. Encourage your church staff and congregation to explore the Australians Together website www.australianstogether.org.au

SEE HOW OTHERS ARE RESPONDING

Be inspired - watch how other churches and congregation members are getting behind the movement:

 **Stairway Church, VIC.** Watch [here](#).

 **Dale Stephenson - Crossway Baptist Church, VIC.** Watch [here](#).

 **Fiona Hilson, VIC.** Watch [here](#).

For further information about Australians Together, please visit:

www.australianstogether.org.au

email: contact@australianstogether.org.au

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