



Open with prayer

Read scripture Luke 4:16-20

Discuss the movie

- Did “Just Mercy” prompt or provoke any discomfort that pushed you to step out of your comfort zone? Please share.
- Did “Just Mercy” impact your understanding of how race shapes peoples’ lives in the U.S.?
- How does our faith guide us to respond to those incarcerated?
- Is “repentance” necessary? If so, in what ways can repentance occur, and how would it occur?
- What is the role of the church in addressing racism in the United States?
- How does Just Mercy help us think about the issues we are seeing in our world today?

Quote Bryan Stevenson

“Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

“The true measure of our character is how we treat the poor, the disfavored, the accused, the incarcerated, and the condemned. We are all implicated when we allow other people to be mistreated.”

“The closer we get to mass incarceration and extreme levels of punishment, the more I believe it’s necessary to recognize that we all need mercy, we all need justice, and—perhaps—we all need some measure of unmerited grace.”

“My work with the poor and the incarcerated has persuaded me that the opposite of poverty is not wealth; the opposite of poverty is justice.”

“Walter made me understand why we have to reform a system of criminal justice that continues to treat people better if they are rich and guilty than if they are poor and innocent.”

Themes from *Just Mercy*

Get Proximate – How does Jesus get close to people and problems in scripture? The closer you get to problems, the more you learn and the more you can empathize. How did Bryan get “proximate?” What things do we need to get proximate to?

Change the Narrative – People and their life situations are often complex. What narrative does Jesus use when working with people? What narratives do we sometimes use? What narratives have we heard others use? What needs to change?

Don't Lose Hope – The pursuit of Justice seems never ending. Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King summarized, “Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” People CAN change, is that something you believe? What do you hope for?

Get Uncomfortable – Bryan was uncomfortable at the start of his journey visiting Death Row. He says, “You have to be willing to do things that make you uncomfortable.” What ways do we need to get uncomfortable? What about our churches?

The United Methodist Church and the Death Penalty

[What we believe](#)

[Faith and Fact Card](#)

“The death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings.” (Social Principles ¶164.G)

“We oppose the death penalty (capital punishment) and urge its elimination from all criminal codes.” (Social Principles ¶164.G)

How can we as United Methodists live into our Social Principles?