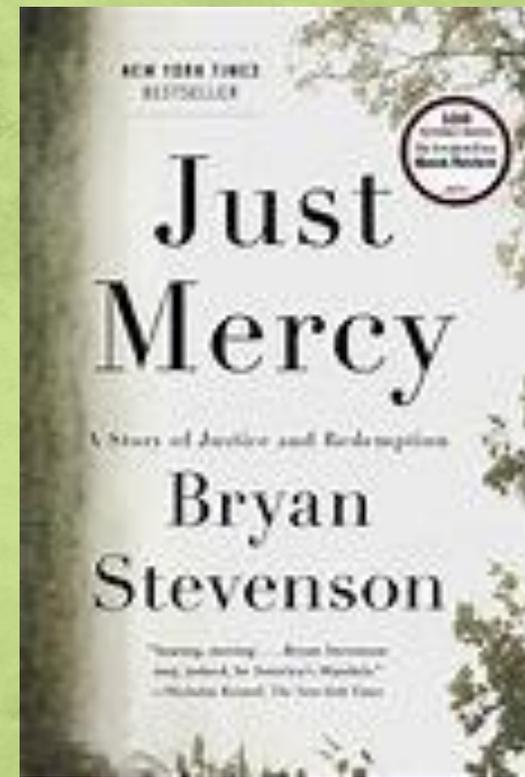


Welcome to the Just Mercy

Summer Grace Group

Fourth Session



Linda Hitchens and Ed Bryant

Prayer for Christian Prisoners

Loving Heavenly Father, I pray for the many Christians who are being held in prisons, both at home and abroad, simply because they trust in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, many of whom have been falsely accused of crimes or deliberately set up to fall foul of the law, simply because they are believers in Your name.

Lord, I pray that You would be with each one in their imprisonment. Break any bonds of fear and bitterness, and may the love of Jesus be shown forth in their actions and attitudes, so that the people around them, recognize that there is something very special about them, and the God whom they serve.

Set each one free, I pray, not only from their physical incarceration but also from their spiritual prison. Help them to rest in the Lord Jesus, knowing that in a small part they are participating in the fellowship of His suffering.

Use each one as a witness of Jesus Christ, and may many be drawn into the kingdom of God, simply because of their gracious love they display in their time of great difficulty.

In Jesus's name, Amen.

Course Structure and Plan

- Lessons based upon the book but will reference the movie
- Lessons
 - Introduction – Chapter 3 June 3
 - Chapter 4 – Chapter 6 June 17
 - Chapter 7 – Chapter 10 July 1
 - Chapter 11 – Chapter 13 July 15
 - Chapter 14 – Epilogue July 29
 - Final session August 12
 - Critical Race Theory
 - The Importance of Music to African Americans
 - Additional Requests from the Discussion Group

Chapter 11, I'll Fly Away

- The bomb threats
- Judge Norton's negative ruling denying relief
 - Order was superficial, insubstantial and uninterested with no case law cited
 - No evidence that Ralph Meyers perjured himself
 - Addressed no other elements of the case presented
- Success of other death row cases: 4 reversals in 1990 and 1991 and 8 reversals in 1992
- Media engaged
 - Washington Post
 - CBS coverage through the 60 Minutes story
 - Local media tries to downplay or dismiss or demonize
 - Attempts to sue with defamation lawsuits; victory for freedom of the press
- Because of the honest news coverage, Chapman began to have doubts
 - ABI conducted a new investigation confirming Walter's innocence
- The subject of hopefulness
- Walter is a free man after 6 years on death row

Discussion Topics

- Changes to the courtroom
 - Change from Judge Norton to Judge Baschab
 - Black deputies
 - Courtroom packed with family and friends
 - No metal detectors or police dogs
 - Change in demeanor of the judge and the prosecutor
- The effect incarceration has on the family and the community

Chapter 12, Mother, Mother

- Marsha Colbey
 - Mother of six; arrested for murdering her stillborn child who was buried in her backyard
 - False testimony of her neighbor and flawed forensic pathologist report
 - Checkered past and poor, dangerous mother
 - Crime sensationalized by the press
 - High rates of infant mortality in the USA
 - Selected a jury that brought many presumptions and biases
 - Found guilty of capital murder and sentenced to life in prison; released after 10 years
- Hundreds of other women falsely accused
 - Unexplained deaths of infants, child chemical endangerment statute
 - No forensic help to avoid wrongful convictions
 - Bridget Lee, Diane Tucker, Victoria Banks, Efernia McClendon, Diane Jones, and unnamed
- The Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women

Discussion Topics

- Why are so many women in prison?
- Collateral consequences

Chapter 13, Recovery

- Major media coverage—local, national, and international
 - Increased media interest in the death penalty: in 1992, 38 executions; in 1999, 98 executions
 - Pete Earley's book *Circumstantial Evidence* is published
- Walter and Bryan go on a speaking tour
- Supreme Court ruling about shielding prosecutors
- No initial compensation for wrongful incarceration
- Wins some compensation and Walter restarts his logging business
 - Gets injured
 - Starts a junk yard
- Walter and Bryan attend a national conference where Walter shares his faith
- Legal aid to death row prisoners became a political target in 1994 and federal funding was quickly eliminated
- Walter's emotional explosion on camera during a TV interview
- Walter's health deteriorates

Discussion Topics

- What is the role of media in demanding justice?
- The humanity of people directly impacted by systemic abuse

Words to Remember

We need more hope. We need more mercy. We need more justice.

Bryan Stevenson

What's in the News

- The Campaign Against Voter Fraud

Where Do We Go From Here?

- **Love Is a Habit** – from the children’s message
- **Repairing Our Relational Infrastructure: Love** – Rev. Dr. Ben Trawick, Grace Presbyterian Church sermon from July 11, 2021
- ??????
- ??????
- ??????

Next Class, Chapters 14 to 16 and Epilogue

- Cruel and Unusual
- Broken
- The Stonecatchers' Song of Sorrow
- Epilogue

Resources and References

- **Primary Resources**

- **Just Mercy** – the movie, available on Prime Video and YouTube
- **Opinion:** When it comes to knowing U.S. history, we should all be 'woke' (an article from the Washington Post): <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/05/27/american-history-we-should-all-be-woke/>
- **13th - A Documentary** by Ava Duvernay
- **Repairing Our Relational Infrastructure: Love** – Rev. Dr. Ben Trawick, Grace Presbyterian Church sermon from July 11, 2021

Resources and References (continued)

- Recommended reference materials
 - **The History of Black Music** – [History of Black Music - Bing video](#)
 - **Michigan Journal of Race and Law, Volume 25, 2020**
 - Man's Best Friend? How Dogs Have Been Used to Oppress African Americans
 - **The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism** by Jemar Tisby
 - **So You Want to Talk About Race** by Ijeoma Oluo