

Series - The Trouble with Christianity  
**Injustice: Hasn't Christianity been a tool  
of oppression?**

James 2:1-17 · April 13, 2008 · St. Andrew's Anglican Church

**Intro - The charge: Christianity has a history of oppression.**

**Christianity's answer...**

**1. The Bible \_\_\_\_\_ . (It expects and condemns abuses.)**

• **The Old Testament prophets**

**Isaiah 58:2-7** - <sup>2</sup> ... they seem eager to know my ways, as if they were a nation that does what is right and has not forsaken the commands of its God... <sup>3</sup> "Why have we fasted," they say, "and you have not seen it? ... "Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers... <sup>6</sup> "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice... to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? <sup>7</sup> Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe him...?"

• **Jesus and the New Testament**

**Luke 11:39, 42** - "You Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness... You neglect justice and the love of God..."

(See also the "Sermon on the Mount," Matt. 5-7)

**1 Peter 4:17** (NLT) – (judgment) must begin with God's household.

**2. There's more to the \_\_\_\_\_ .**

• **Oppression is not unique to Christianity or to religion.**

"Societies that have rid themselves of all religion have been just as oppressive as those steeped in it. We can only conclude that there is some violent impulse so deeply rooted in the human heart that it expresses itself regardless of what the beliefs of a particular society might be -- whether socialist or capitalist, whether religious or irreligious, whether individualistic or hierarchical." - Tim Keller, The Reason for God

• **A few examples of justice done in Jesus' name**

William Wilberforce (1800s)  
Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1940s)  
Catholic church against communists in Poland (1980s)  
Martin Luther King, Jr. (1960s)

**3. The remedy: Not less but \_\_\_\_\_ Christianity.**

**What is true Christianity like?**

- **Its source is a God who loves to bless the disenfranchised.**

**James 2:5** - ... Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?

**James 1:9-10** (NLT) - Believers who are poor have something to boast about, for God has honored them. <sup>10</sup> And those who are rich should boast that God has humbled them.

**1 Cor. 1:26** - Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.

- **True Christians will develop God's love for them, too.**

**James 2:15-17** - Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. <sup>16</sup> If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? <sup>17</sup> In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

**James 2:13** - ...judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful...

**How do we get this kind of love? God's \_\_\_\_\_ grace.**

**James 1:9-10** - The brother in humble circumstances ought to take pride in his high position. <sup>10</sup> But the one who is rich should take pride in his low position.

BLANKS: 1. AGREES; 2. STORY; 3. TRUER, LEVELING

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Translation key: Unless noted, all verses are from the New International Version. NLT = New Living Translation.