

SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE



**PRINCE
OF PEACE**
Called to Connect



Liberty and Justice for All

July 5, 2020

Mr. Rogers taught generations of children that life is like a neighborhood, and everyone we encounter is our neighbor. There are challenges and conflicts in the neighborhood, but with grace, gentleness and persistence we can live together well. Racism is a big, scary word and the thought of engaging in the battle against it can be even bigger and scarier. But what if we saw marginalized people of color as our neighbor?

SCRIPTURE TEXT: ISAIAH 65:17-24

Read the scripture text together as a group.

BACKGROUND INFO

Having escaped oppression, our framers of our Constitution cast a vision for a nation in which we recognize that “all men are created equal” and that we ensure “liberty and justice for all.” It’s a stunning vision, but one of which we have fallen short. Tony Campolo does a wonderful job of parsing Isaiah 65 by calling it God’s vision of a just world.

In Isaiah 65, the prophet Isaiah speaks the words of God to a nation of people who have lost the plot. They have gone their own way. They have done their own thing. They have not been faithful to God’s dream of liberty and justice for all. There is a remnant, though. There is a small group of faithful followers who do desire to live into God’s original dream and vision for liberty and justice for all people—no exceptions. And so God speaks a word of hope and promise, a vision for a new world. Isaiah 65 is God’s Pledge of Allegiance to the entire human family! This is God’s pledge, God’s promise to make all things new. This is God’s pledge, God’s promise to those who do not experience justice or live in freedom that justice and freedom will come. This is God’s pledge, God’s promise to those whose dreams of life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness have been stolen by some other vision that does not include liberty and justice for all.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What stirs in you when you hear the phrase “liberty and justice for all? Have the events of the past couple months changed your response? How so?
- What stands out to you from this section of Isaiah 65?
- What does God promise in these verses?
- How do we lean into these promises and promote “liberty and justice for all” in our community?

APPLICATION: This week, consider a next step you can take towards making the vision of “liberty and justice for all” a reality “on earth as it is in heaven.” How is God working in your heart this Independence weekend?