Speaking in rather broad terms there are two ways we can navigate life. The first is to make decisions based on something larger than ourselves, be it a code, a philosophy, a religious belief or something we saw on *Star Trek*. The second way to go through life is to make decisions based solely on whether or not the outcome of that decision will be good for us. In our lesson from Isaiah today we read this, “Thus says the Lord: Maintain justice, and do what is right, for soon my salvation will come, and my deliverance be revealed.” When God is saying to do what is right there is an understanding of a universal or cosmic ideal of what constitutes right.

This is a silly example, but you can think about the two ways of thinking like this: Let’s say I am running late for church (for this you will need to think back to a day where this could happen, which might take some doing). So as I am coming down the road I notice someone is crossing the street. Now if my world was small and all that mattered was me and my priorities it might make sense for me to run over the person in the crosswalk because they are impeding my progress. If, however, we look to something higher we might notice that Christianity talks of the sanctity of life. As a result, I would not run the person over because the larger law supplants my smaller law. That is what God is asking us to look toward when he asks us to maintain justice and to do what is right. He is asking us to do things that extend beyond what is best for us at the moment. And speaking on purely secular or pragmatic terms, we know that a society that aspires to a higher understanding of virtues and works from a shared set of virtues, functions far better. My being able to steal from you only works to the extent that you do not steal back from me. When society universally declares that larger norms and standards do not apply to them you don’t get the *Age of Aquarius* you get *The Lord of the Flies*. And while it is very easy to say that there are a lot of people who need to adhere to a Judeo-Christian understanding of how morality should work, the harder part is for us to live out our lives in such a way where we do what is right in God’s eyes all the time. Here is what I mean by this. I am fairly good with not murdering or stealing my neighbors Buick, but where I slip up fairly regularly is on the smaller less noticed behaviors that others may not see yet God considers to be right. That is I am not real strong on turning the other cheek or forgiving those who have wronged me. But when God asks us to maintain justice and do what is right he means it for all aspects of our lives. For really in many ways we can say that life is a journey where we grow in our adherence to following God’s view of right and shrink in adhering to what is best for us at the time. And to do this it is going to require greater attention to those smaller less noticed aspects of our lives.

As you know, I am a Formula One fan which unfortunately for you means you get sermon illustrations from that involve race cars. One of the greatest race drivers of the eighties and early nineties was a Frenchman by the name of Alain Prost (he was also Armenian which makes him extra awesome). Now I said that he is one of the greatest drivers who ever raced but the interesting thing was he did not have the most natural talent. Yes, he was a very good driver but his real advantage came because he paid attention to every detail about how the car was set up. He could tell his engineers exactly why they were losing speed in a particular corner or how much downforce they needed. His advantage came in the small things. Going through life we need to be like Alain Prost . We need to ask whether we are doing God’s will in everything, are we trying to get every detail right? Before I go on I want to point out that I am not suggesting scrupulosity, which is where we hyper focus on our every shortcoming. Rather I am suggesting that we focus on the parts that other people may not notice – forgiving someone who we no longer see or thinking more charitably of others. These may seem small when compared to murder or adultery but like Alain Prost learned it is these small things that make us better.

 Sometimes we wonder why God seems absent in our lives and I wonder if it is because we are not thinking about doing right in the places only God notices. I always find it interesting when you walk by construction sites. What I notice is that the first few weeks or months it looks like very little happens, there is just a hole in the ground. But then one day, almost by magic, the framing for the walls and roof seem to appear. A hole in the ground miraculously begins to look like a building. But the thing is it is not that the construction workers have been lazy up to the moment that the framing went up, but rather that they have been working on the unseen things which make possible for that which is more visible. If the pipes were not put in or if the foundation was not laid the framing could not be done successfully. However, in our spiritual lives we tend to focus on the visible to the neglect of the invisible. We neglect the foundation and then can’t figure out why we are not spiritual giants. God today tells us to maintain justice and do right in all things big or small so that we may be his both now and forevermore.