



Social Justice Sunday Resources June 23, 2024

THEMES:

- ❖ Let justice roll down
- ❖ Celebrate the promise of freedom

SCRIPTURES

❖ **Old Testament: Amos 5:18-24**

¹⁸ Woe to you who desire the day of the LORD!

Why do you want the day of the LORD?

It is darkness, not light,

¹⁹ as if someone fled from a lion

and was met by a bear

or went into the house and rested a hand against the wall

and was bitten by a snake.

²⁰ Is not the day of the LORD darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

²¹ I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them,

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.

²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;

I will not listen to the melody of your harps.

²⁴ But let justice roll down like water

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

❖ **New Testament: Matthew 23:23-24**

²³ "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cumin and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ²⁴ You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

SONG SUGGESTIONS

Voices Together (VT) / Hymnal: A Worship Book (HWB)

- ❖ *The River is Here* by Andy Park CCLI Song Number 1475231
- ❖ *HWB 495 O Let All Who Thirst*

- ❖ *VT 193 When Israel Was in Egypt's Land*
- ❖ *VT 306 I Want Jesus to Walk with Me*
- ❖ *VT 611 / HWB 579 Lift Every Voice and Sing*
- ❖ *VT 694 Tears of Suffering (tune is [Jefferson](#))*
- ❖ *VT 706 / HWB 372 O Healing River*
- ❖ *VT 715 Longing for Light*
- ❖ *VT 767 / HWB 397 Nzambi wakatamba / God Loves All His Many People*
- ❖ *VT 770 / HWB 638 God is Working This Purpose Out*
- ❖ *VT 772 God of Justice*
- ❖ *VT 776 Teach Me Thy Truth*
- ❖ *VT 778 / HWB 307 Will You Let Me Be Your Servant*
- ❖ *VT 791 Let Justice Flow Down*

CALL TO WORSHIP

❖ **Ps 36:5-10 (NIV)**

- ⁵ Your love, Lord, reaches to the heavens,
your faithfulness to the skies.
- ⁶ Your righteousness is like the highest mountains,
your justice like the great deep.
You, Lord, preserve both people and animals.
- ⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God!
People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.
- ⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house;
you give them drink from your river of delights.
- ⁹ For with you is the fountain of life;
in your light we see light.
- ¹⁰ Continue your love to those who know you,
your righteousness to the upright in heart.

READINGS / PRAYERS

- ❖ *Hymnal: A Worship Book # 732*
- ❖ *Voices Together #611 - African American National Anthem*
- ❖ *Voices Together #1043*
- ❖ **Prayer:** *Despite the fact we are all made in your image, God, we can see ourselves as brothers and sisters only by the light of your redeeming grace. Give us eyes to see that we are made from the same dirt and help us work to reconcile ourselves to one another and to the ground beneath us. Amen.* - Quoted in *Common Prayer: A liturgy for common radicals*, by Shane Claiborne, et al, (Zondervan, 2010), 149.

CHILDREN'S LESSONS

- ❖ Find books to use for a children's lesson here:
<https://kbinbloom.com/childrens-books-about-juneteenth/>
- ❖ *Born on the Water* by Nikole Hannah-Jones and Renee Watson
- ❖ *That Flag* by Tameka Fryer Brown

SERMON STARTERS

❖ **AMOS**

Today's Amos passage ends with one of the most-quoted verses in this short prophetic book. "Let justice roll down" is a rousing and noble aspiration. But....there's the awkward "but" that begins the verse that, when understood, makes the entire verse discomfoting and more demanding.

Amos was a rural herder called to deliver heart-felt and dramatic warnings. He addressed the leaders of Israel and Judah at a time of military security, economic prosperity, and great religious observation and sacrifice. Trouble was, no one was paying attention to the abuse of the land, exploitation of the workers, inequity of the judicial system, or the lack of concern for any of these things by the wealthy despite their generous sacrifice in worship.

Through Amos, God says, in effect, "Your worship is a joke to me—it offends me—unless your hearts are touched with compassion for those in need and you work to bring all people into the blessings of my covenant."

To speak Amos' call for wholesale godly justice with integrity, God calls for us to engage our hearts and behaviors in breaking historic bonds that oppress, dominate, and disadvantage people. Without this fullness of discipleship, how will God regard our offerings, our prayers, and our songs?

❖ **MATTHEW**

It is often easy to do the little things but much more difficult to do the bigger, and often more important, things in life. The Pharisees were a group of religious folk that took it upon themselves to interpret the Law and to determine how it should be applied to new situations, though they generally refused contact with "sinners" and were repulsed by Jesus' contact with all peoples, especially the lowlies and "sinners."

This passage notes that the Pharisees tended to pay attention to the gnat, the little thing, but to neglect the camel, the bigger thing. In the same way, we often neglect the ways that we are to act toward and to bless others.

Earlier in Matthew, in chapter 5, Jesus reinterprets the Law. He uses the phrase *You have heard that it was said.....but I tell you* as his way of teaching that He transcends the Law. Justice and mercy and faith must rule in us for us to live the way God intended. When we are concerned about these bigger issues, our concern, support and solidarity for others becomes part of our nature.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

❖ [Ohio Conference's Racial Reconciliation Team Grace & Groundings Resource List](#)

❖ Quotes

- ❖ *There is no improving the future without disturbing the present.*
 - **Catherine Booth**, co-founder of the Salvation Army, and a passionate advocate for children
- ❖ *To be free is not merely to cast off one's chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.*
 - **Nelson Mandela**, the first black president of South Africa, co-founder of the Salvation Army, and a passionate advocate for children
- ❖ *Only by a union of intelligence and sympathy across the color line in this critical period of the Republic shall justice and right triumph.*
 - **W.E.B. DeBois**, co-founder of the NAACP, February 12, 1909
- ❖ Called from the world of politics to serve the church, Ambrose of Milan (339-397), was a leader who spoke truth to power and did not back down, insisting that “the emperor is in the church, not over it.”