

Amos: Where Justice Begins
2023-08-13

Amos 5:23-24

Take away from me the noise of your songs;

to the melody of your harps I will not listen.

24 But let justice roll down like waters,

and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

Sound of Freedom: social justice **issue** of child **trafficking**.

- Social justice: **process** of **making** things **right and fair** for **less fortunate** than self.

Many issues can fall into: child trafficking, **homelessness**, abortion, **racism**, etc.

- **Different opinions** on how to **address** each but **agree not** much **progress**.
 - Biblically: **True social** justice **begins** with **hearts transformed** by **Gospel**.

Amos: **oldest** prophet of **12 Major Prophets**...all originally in **one book** of **Hebrew Bible**.

- All **theme unity** (sin, punishment, restoration) **yet specific** content for **times**. See outline at the end.
 - **Jesus Christ** in Amos in **promises** of Amos **9:11-15**

Amos **760-753 BC** : Israel in unparalleled **outward prosperity** since Solomon's days but **spiritually and morally bankrupt**: Amos 2:4b, 6b-8, 5:10-12, 8:4-7

- **Outwardly religious**: sacrifice, **tithe**, thank-offerings to **comfort conscience** and look good.
- **Immoral**, idol, **greed**, covet, **unjust**, corrupt, and uncaring leaders, **oppress poor**.
 - **God's deep commitment** to **justice** leads Him to **require society** also maintain **commitment** to do **right by all**.

God sent Amos, **poor rancher, farmer** from South Kingdom of **Judah** with **message** of **judgement** to **North Kingdom** of Israel **specifically** for oppression, **exploitation**, and selling of **poor**. Amos 7:12-13

- But Israel in **prosperous times** so **judgement** seemed **improbable** and they God's **chosen people** so **no evil could befall** them.... This **made their sin greater**.

Through **Amos** (a.k.a. Social Justice Prophet) Lord **pointed out** Israel's **hypocrisy**.

- **True worship** always **leads** to **justice**, right, **love neighbor**. Amos 5:21-24

Amos' warning **not cause repentance**...**50 years later** Is **conquered** by **Assyrians**.

- **Measure** of Amos **success not** by its **effects then but now**.

- **Role of prophet: Comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable.**

Many Christians today like Israel in 722 BC...give lip service to God yet pay little mind to people created in His image.

- **Selfishness and addiction to comfort** make many Christians **neglect, indifferent, or hardened** against **less fortunate needs**.... Less fortunate as a term, instead of **poor**.
 - **Often reflected in handling of finances & activity** related to **social justice issues**. 1 Peter 2:12, Micah 6:8, 1 John 4:20-21, 3:17-18
- What **give or spend** says about you and **scriptural goals for finances?**
 - **Help “blood”** but God calls help **stranger**.... **especially Christian**
- **Pray, inform, post** about social justice issue **without action**.....**both essential**.
 - **DO** justice...**PRAY IF OVERWHELMED** **Safe Families** and **Hope’s Door**.

True love for God manifests in love and concern for people made in His image.

- **Justice and compassion naturally flow from hearts in love with Jesus Christ.**
 - **Are your money or actions** consistent with **Lord’s heart** toward **less fortunate?**

God's mercy and grace in Gospel is transformative both personally, and societally!

- **Evidence: New Testament** communities **affected** economically, religiously, politically, **socially**.

Only Gospel power to change lives which can **change society and culture**.

- **Can’t legislate social justice**, reform with new laws, or enforce existing laws **because social change must begin in heart of man**. Amos 5:24, Proverbs 4:23
 - **Evil in heart will break laws** and do **injustice**.
- **True social justice begins with hearts transformed by Gospel**.