

Know Justice Know Peace

Study Questions | 03.24.24

Brett McBride | Amos 5:18-27



Consider

Discuss: How would you define “social justice”? It has become very popular within western society to talk about and be active in social justice, what examples are there in broader Toronto society these days?

Discuss: There are various ways that people stand up against injustice in our world today. Think back over the last five years, across the globe, and where you get your information or news from. Describe various different ways that people have expressed their desire for change. How have you felt as you have watched these events/talks/discussions/expressions? How have you been involved?

Let's Examine

Setting the stage: Amos 5: 18-27

- **Discuss:** God uses very strong language in this passage! Describe how God shows his displeasure.
- **Discuss:** What is “the day of the LORD!”? Why is it despicable that they would ‘long for’ or ‘desire’ it?
- **Discuss:** List the various forms of worship which God mentions. List the various forms of worship which we participate in today. Could God have the same displeasure for our forms of worship as he did those in Amos? How and why?

Justice & Righteousness: Know Justice – Know Peace

- The pairing of justice and righteousness (Mishpat & Tsedekah) happens repeatedly in Amos. What is God’s restorative Justice? What is God’s righteousness?
- **If God’s Righteousness is the divine characteristic that describes God as *acting always in a way that is consistent with his own character*, how would you describe God’s character? Start by using Exodus 34:6-7. Give other Bible references to expand your definition.**
- In Amos 5:7 what people are doing to justice and righteousness is negative. In v.24, it is God speaking. What is he saying?
- If *justice* ‘evens the playing field’, quickly discuss how Jesus goes beyond *justice* in Matthew 5: 38-45

Church history: responding in God’s way to injustice: racism, extortion, oppression, violence, cruelty

As we saw a few weeks ago, Ephesians talks about Oneness in the church. However, history has shown that the pseudoscientific classification and *othering* of people within the evil idea of *race* have perpetuated within the Church.

Brett gave us an excellent example of the same type of hypocrisy which was evident in the Israelites in Amos: The KKK were espousing to be following Jesus and basing their principles on God's Word, while at the same time declaring radical white supremacy and violence.

- **Discuss:** How is what the KKK document said similar to those spoken about in Amos 5:18-27? How was it different?

Martin Luther King Jr.: an example of Godly lamenting and seeking Justice

The book of AMOS was formative to Martin Luther King Jr.'s thinking. Also, the Semon on the Mount. He founded his approach and his ideas for a solution on Jesus.

- **Discuss:** How does this quote reflect both Amos and Jesus' teaching: **Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that! Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that!**
- **Discuss:** How does this quote from Mahatma Gandhi reflect God's voice in Amos 5: "I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians. Your Christians are so unlike your Christ."

Brett said: Martin Luther King Jr. saw how non-violent protest exposed the violence and oppression of the injustice suffered. **Discuss** What that means?

Biblical Justice and Social Justice:

Brett said: *Biblical Justice is rooted in [God's] righteousness! It's not just a pursuit of justice that is untethered! But rather one that is anchored in His righteous moral character! **Martin Luther King Jr. pursued justice in a way that reflected the righteousness of God!** And when God's righteousness confronts injustice – it reflects and reveals just how utterly unjust the oppressor is!*

- **Discuss:** Do you agree with Brett's statement?
- **Discuss:** After considering Brett's words, read the quote from Martin Luther King Jr.'s I HAVE A DREAM speech below. Highlight how his words reflect God's righteousness.
In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.
- **Discuss:** How is this a different approach compared to some of those examples of social justice campaigning you mentioned above in the CONSIDER section?

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED FOLLOW UP:

Read Martin Luther King Jr.'s

"6 Principles of Non-violence"

Linked [HERE](#).

And watch the movie "**Selma**" (2014)

Let's Apply

Group discussion:

- What examples of injustice have you witnessed – right before your very eyes! - being experienced by other people?
- How does it make you feel? Why do you have those feelings – what thoughts and beliefs are behind your emotional response?
- Have you ever felt like you relate to those who have responded with violence, seeking oppression for the oppressor, hate and destruction? Why? How can your feelings/relating be a help for those suffering injustice? How can they be a problem?
- Is there someone who you think is an excellent example of seeking Biblical Justice – do you have a role model?
- Many people in social justice conversations talk about ally-ship. When is being an ally to someone suffering injustice Biblical and when is it not? Have you ever acted like an ally? Talk as a group about different ways that we can be allies to 1) people in your everyday life and 2) Big societal or national or global expressions of (past and present) injustice.

Personal Reflection: Are you currently in a situation where you understand you are experiencing injustice? Can you explain it to God? Write God a letter explaining your situation to Him. What do you believe He is saying to you about the injustice? Do you have someone you can share this with who will encourage you to have a response which is in line with God's righteousness?

- If you are not currently aware of injustice issues in your life, what might God be trying to teach you through this study?
- How might Jesus be asking us to go beyond just justice toward a *Sermon on the Mount* style of representing Him?

Let's Pray

- **Praise God:** That He is Righteous & Good, Loving & compassionate, powerful & gracious
- **Confess** (silently or out loud) when you have just done the motions of worship, when you life and you worship have not been in sync.
- **Ask the Holy Spirit** to empower each person in your group to seek justice, love mercy and walk humbly.
- **Continue to pray** for the church around the world; That we will stop being hypocrites and align our lives/thoughts with God's character.