



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

...And Justice For All

But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream! (Amos 5:24, NIV)

Not many folks remember the American Golf Classic played at Firestone Country Club in late August 1963 when Johnny Pott led wire-to-wire to win the championship and finish four strokes ahead of Arnold Palmer.

However, a vast majority of us likely remember that three days later, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington D.C., Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. In exhorting the estimated 250,000 attendees to press the fight for justice and civil rights, Dr. King quoted the prophet Amos. He proclaimed: “No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until justice rolls down like waters and righteousness like a mighty stream....”

Amos was a shepherd who also tended sycamore-fig trees in Tekoa, a small village in the Judean countryside just south of Jerusalem. God called him to leave his home in the Southern Kingdom and go north to Israel to deliver God’s messages to the people living in the Northern Kingdom.

In the mid-eighth century BC, Israel, under King Jeroboam, achieved enormous economic prosperity. However, the rich and powerful Israelites were consumed by greed and selfishness. The poor and weaker members of society were not able to benefit from this tremendous economic improvement, and as a result, there was an ever-increasing economic chasm between the rich and the poor.

The oppressed and the marginalized in that society experienced tremendous hardship at the hands of the wealthy. Among other things, the poor were bought and sold (Amos 2:6); their belongings confiscated (Amos 2:8); they were oppressed (Amos 4:1), extorted (Amos 5:11), and denied justice (Amos 5:12). Amos’ notion of justice was, quite simply, behavior or treatment that is based on what is right and fair according to God’s law.

Sixty years after Dr. King’s speech, we can legitimately wonder if any significant progress has been made in the fight for justice. There is compelling evidence that power and wealth are aggregating in a tiny elite class; the gap in wealth disparity is widening--not shrinking; and many in our society struggle to make ends meet just to survive.

In Amos’ time, just like in our society today, we are called to act justly and do right by other people, particularly the most vulnerable members of society whose rights have often been trampled by the

strong. We must help the disadvantaged, the downtrodden, the powerless, the abused, and those with little voice in society.

We must heed Amos' call to cease being passive by simply lamenting injustice when we see it. Instead, we must faithfully act to secure justice for everyone. I am reminded of a church I attended in Minnesota where there was a strong commitment to "doing"—so strong that members wore T-shirts with the slogan "The Church Has Left the Building" emblazoned on the front.

We must act according to what God calls us to do at a societal level by donating to, volunteering at, and even leading organizations dedicated to achieving justice. At the individual level, we must strive to be kind and generous to people in our lives who are in need and act fairly in all that we do.

Amos' call to us is quite simple: We must flood our communities with acts of justice and righteousness like a stream that moves flowingly.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, you have called us to do what is right and fair in our lives. Help us to secure justice for those around us.

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