

## SCRIPTURE STUDY SHEET FOR AUGUST 1, 2021 @ CAPC OAKLAND

Reflecting on the Fifth of the Six Great Ends of the Church  
The Church is for “The promotion of social righteousness”

Amos 5: 14-24  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

- <sup>31</sup> Seek good and not evil,  
that you may live;  
and so the Lord, the God of heavenly forces,  
will be with you just as you have said.
- <sup>15</sup> Hate evil, love good,  
and establish justice at the city gate.  
Perhaps the Lord God of heavenly forces  
will be gracious to what is left of Joseph.
- <sup>16</sup> Truly, the Lord proclaims,  
the God of heavenly forces, the Lord:  
Crying will be heard in all the squares.  
In all the streets they will say, “Oh no! Oh no!”  
They will call upon the farmers to wail,  
and those skilled in mourning to lament.
- <sup>17</sup> In all the vineyards there will be bitter crying because  
I will pass through your midst, says the Lord.
- <sup>18</sup> Doom to those who desire the day of the Lord!  
Why do you want the day of the Lord?  
It is darkness, not light;
- <sup>19</sup> as if someone fled from a lion,  
and was met by a bear;  
or sought refuge in a house,  
rested a hand against the wall,  
and was bitten by a snake.
- <sup>20</sup> Isn't the day of the Lord darkness, not light;  
all dark with no brightness in it?
- <sup>21</sup> I hate, I reject your festivals;  
I don't enjoy your joyous assemblies.
- <sup>22</sup> If you bring me your entirely burned offerings  
and gifts of food—  
I won't be pleased;  
I won't even look at your offerings of well-fed animals.
- <sup>23</sup> Take away the noise of your songs;  
I won't listen to the melody of your harps.
- <sup>24</sup> *But let **JUSTICE** roll down like waters,  
and **righteousness** like an ever-flowing stream.*

Luke 4:14-30  
COMMON ENGLISH BIBLE

- <sup>14</sup> Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee,  
and news about him spread throughout the whole

### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Amos was the first Hebrew prophet to have a biblical book named for him. He was a shepherd, who worked as a prophet in the 8th century BC during the reigns of King Uzziah (c. 783–742 BC) of Judah (the southern kingdom) and King Jeroboam II (c. 786–746 BC) of Israel (the Northern Kingdom). He prophesies the destruction of the kingdom because of its sinful embrace of idolatry (worshipping false and other gods) and the horrible economic inequality that the rich and powerful preserved at the expense of the poor (going against the righteous way of living the God taught and demanded).

*But let justice roll down...* :: Amos is a prophet whom Dr. King loved to quote. This verse in particular.

**JUSTICE** / *righteousness* :: These words are related, so much so that in French they are both translated as “justice”. Justice in Hebrew is MISPHAT, which is what is right, as proscribed by a judge. God being the ultimate judge between what is good and evil, acting from between God's wrath and merciful love. Righteous is TSEDAQAH which is God's justice enacted, living rightly, truthfully, in a God-like way. They're inter-related and also have meaning that are moral, economic, financial, political and spiritual. Some other verses that help elucidate the depth of this meaning include:

*Isaiah 1:17*: “Seek justice which is helping the oppressed; defending the orphan; pleading for the widow.”

*Micah 6:8*: “This is what God asks of you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with your God.

*James 1:27*: “True faith,.., is this: to care for orphans and widows in their difficulties and to keep the world from contaminating us.”

countryside. <sup>15</sup> He taught in their synagogues and was praised by everyone.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been raised. On the Sabbath he went to the synagogue as he normally did and stood up to read. <sup>17</sup> The synagogue assistant gave him the scroll from the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

<sup>18</sup> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because the Lord has *anointed* me.  
He has sent me to preach good news to the poor,  
to proclaim *release* to the prisoners  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to *liberate* the oppressed,

<sup>19</sup> and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

<sup>20</sup> [Jesus] rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the synagogue assistant, and sat down. Every eye in the synagogue was fixed on him. <sup>21</sup> He began to explain to them, "Today, this scripture has been fulfilled just as you heard it."

<sup>22</sup> Everyone was raving about Jesus, so impressed were they by the gracious words flowing from his lips. They said, "This is Joseph's son, isn't it?"

<sup>23</sup> Then Jesus said to them, "Undoubtedly, you will quote this saying to me: 'Doctor, heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we've heard you did in Capernaum.'" <sup>24</sup> He said, "I assure you that no prophet is welcome in the prophet's hometown. <sup>25</sup> And I can assure you that there were many widows in Israel during Elijah's time, when it didn't rain for three and a half years and there was a great food shortage in the land. <sup>26</sup> Yet Elijah was sent to none of them but only to a widow in the city of Zarephath in the region of Sidon. <sup>27</sup> There were also many persons with skin diseases in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha, but none of them were cleansed. Instead, Naaman the Syrian was cleansed."

<sup>28</sup> When they heard this, everyone in the synagogue was filled with anger. <sup>29</sup> They rose up and ran him out of town. They led him to the crest of the hill on which their town had been built so that they could throw him off the cliff. <sup>30</sup> But he passed through the crowd and went on his way.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged you, enraged you, or surprised you in these texts?
- Why do you think God is so angry with the people in Amos 5? Why do the people of Nazareth go from adoring Jesus to wanting to kill him? What do these texts say about how God defines and relates to righteousness & justice?
- How is the Spirit of God inviting you – or us as a church – to act, speak, be or change through this word about truth in this time of great financial inequality, racial reckoning and the widening impact of the COVID pandemic?

### LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

Luke's gospel is one populated with the theme of insiders and outsiders, developed through parables spoken by Jesus and his public actions. This literary emphasis might be because Luke was the only Gentile in an all-Jewish cast of New Testament writers. His identifying with the outsiders shapes how he tells the story of the life, teaching, death and resurrection of Jesus. Today's selection retells the inaugural preaching of Jesus: his debut on the public stage in which he declares what kind of Messiah he will be.

*anointed*:: The word in Hebrew is *mashach* and in Greek *Chrio* in Greek - which give us the words *Messiah* and *Christ* – meaning, God's anointed (or chosen) one.

*release - liberate* :: In Greek and Hebrew this is the same word *APHESIS* – which is used to describe the forgiveness of both sins and debts, as well as the liberation of the imprisoned or oppressed. Spiritual, physical, economic and political liberation are all connected in the Jewish world-view.

*Prophet - Elijah - Elisha - Naaman*:: Jesus identifies himself as a prophet, and with the prophets Elijah and Elisha. He does so in evoking a story in which God sends the prophet to save a Gentile, not a Jewish believer. This statement is what seems to make the crowd move quickly from loving Jesus to wanting to kill him.