

# Amos and the Justice of God: Session 1

## By Roy Roberts

Speaker 1:

... [Audio begins] who is a Biola graduate and a Talbot graduate, and he's presently working with Chuck Coulson and Prison Fellowship. And he also told me to add that he is my best friend. Let's welcome him up.

Roy Roberts:

Story time. What is this? What are the balloons for? Your birthday? Never been kissed. Do I have any volunteers? Remember? It tastes great. Oh what a group. Well, I've been trying to get to the Book of Amos for a year now, and since I last tried, I've been developing to study a little bit more. Are they cackle fresh? Or what? It's going to be a fun afternoon. Anybody have a birthday tomorrow? Oh, shucks. Who cares?

The whole dynamic of justice is a relatively new concept for me. As I listen to President Cook this morning in Chapel, there are so many ways to approach God's Word. Absolutely an inexhaustible book. I'm just delighted in hearing the insights from this man's own study and his experience. When I graduated from seminary, I knew everything. Everything. And as time has gone on, I have discovered every single year how much of the Word I do not know and how profound the book is. And during the last few years I have been concentrating on justice and compassion, both in the Hebrew and in the Greek. And very challenged for the last, well, since 1977, I have been involved with prison fellowship. I've done some writing of curriculum. I've been an instructor in prison, done a number of things for Prison Fellowship, and January of 1984, I went full time.

It's nice enough to get a job offer, you know what I mean? But when an organization is so persistent over the years, after a while, you come to realize that maybe you should be in God's will. It's a very nice place to be. And I put together out of my experience and the things that I've learned from being exposed to men like Chuck Coulson, for example, who is a former prisoner. I've been doing a lot of reading in the area over the past few years. Alexander Soldietzen, a prisoner.

I haven't coined the phrase, but I've come to the point where I believe that there is a theology of oppression and it is rich. Most of us in this room, I don't believe, have really suffered to the extent that someone who is incarcerated suffers. And the Word of God, of course, contains a great deal of information on just such theology. Many Bible characters were prisoners. Can you think of a few? Anybody? There's one? Silas? Anybody else? Joseph. Christ. Anybody else, huh? Jeremiah. Anybody else? Daniel.

See, you start thinking and you realize that there's a great deal of theology of oppression in the Scripture and something happens to an individual that is incarcerated. Now you're well aware that many of these folks are absolutely innocent, which makes the suffering even more intense. The entire subject of justice. I am not going to tackle that. I want to, but I'm not going to. I'm going to eventually get into the Book of Amos.

But I want to just have a few basic introductory remarks here this afternoon to kind of wet our appetite for the Book of Amos, and I want to just give a few thoughts and a few illustrations to begin with. One of my favorite stories growing up was Old Yeller. Thank you. I like puppies.

It was the story of a pioneer family carving out an existence on the wild edge of the wilderness. They adopt a huge old yellow dog after it saves their boys from a pack of wild pigs. The dog lives as a beloved member of the family until one day it again saves their lives from an attack by a rabid wolf. In the process, however, Old Yeller contracts rabies himself and the lovable lapped mutt is reduced to a snarling mindless set of slashing teeth. And the son who owned Old Yeller was faced with the incomprehensible responsibility of shooting the dog, which had twice saved his life.

In a tear jerking scene, the father comes out to console his son and the loss of his dog a blow which the whole family felt. And I'll never forget the tender words of wisdom his father gave. Son, sometimes life just hauls off and sucks you on right in the gut and there's no explaining it, and all you can do is hang on until you catch your breath and then start living again. Life is like that. And as I have met men and women inside prison, men and women where life has kicked them in the gut.

As I've met people who are diagnosed with terminal disease, life has kicked them in the gut. I'm not going to ask you to raise your hand or anything today, but I'm sure that if I were to ask you to do that, how many of you have ever been kicked in the gut like that? I'm sure that most of you, if not all of your hands, would go up. And obviously the question is, why me? What did I do to

deserve that? And that kind of thought process. One of my favorite Bible teachers today is Texuandal. Really love that man's Ministry, and here is a Church that allows this man time to study the word and they leave administration to other folk and so forth. And the result is a tremendous Ministry worldwide.

And he gave an illustration once that I'd like to just share with you. Chuck Swindoll tells the story of a man who was on his way home from work on the subway in New York. He was prone to motion sickness. He had had a big lunch which didn't agree with him. He had worked hard all afternoon in a smoke filled conference room, and he boarded the subway with an already upset stomach. He was jammed onto the train, the last one to get on the train and the automatic door closed right at the end of his nose. And so as he was standing there, facing out the closed doorway, things were flashing by 90 miles an hour, and the longer he stood there, the sicker he got.

The train pulled up to the next stop, but he didn't want to get up. He had to get to his destination. However, the train was so full, no one could get on, even though a small crowd was pressed up near the slowing train. The lurching and jerking of the stopping train was the last straw for the fellow's motion sickness. The door opened up came his lunch all over the man standing on the platform waiting. The door closed without anyone getting on or off, and the train sped on down the track.

The unfortunate man whose chest had become the depository for the sick man's lunch turned to the person standing next to him, raised his palms to the heavens and cried, Why me? And as we

go through life, sooner or later, the doors of life open and someone's lunch is deposited on our chest and we cry, Why me? Why this? Why now? And where's the justice? I'm not speaking as an authority on justice. I am speaking as a student of the subject. I don't know all the answers, but there are a lot of confusing questions to me.

I've never been born black, and I haven't grown up in the ghetto, but I've noticed that 57% of our prisons are filled with black people and they're all poor. And for years some of the black leaders have been using the term social justice, and they ask, where is the justice? Some of our states, where the majority population is white, the majority population in prison is black. There's a lot I don't understand, and there's a lot that I'm considering, and I'm thinking through. There's a lot that I'm researching. There's a lot that is challenging me, as I've never been challenged before.

I'm having difficulty giving answers to the wise. I'll give you just one example. The subject of suffering. I can give you probably ten or twelve purposes in suffering from the Scripture via 1 Peter, James, so forth. But I don't think that I can adequately answer to my own satisfaction why there is suffering. And you know, sometimes it's confusing. It was confusing to David because David asked, why do the righteous suffer?

But the longer I live and the more I study the word, the less I am interested in answering the whys, because in between the lines of Scripture, things begin to surface. One example about suffering. I may not know why there are storms, and I've had plenty of bold sessions with friends at conference centers and in restaurants and in dormitory rooms on the why of suffering. But I may not be able to answer why there are storms, but the word of God is full of promises that tell

me that you and I, who love Jesus will make the harbor. See what I'm saying? So why does it become that important? Someday Jesus will give us a full exposition of why, but he will give that exposition in the safety of the harbor.

You can say, Amen if you want its okay. Thank you. One person whispered, Amen. It's all right. I'll take a whisper. My first prison seminar took place in 1978. I got a call when I was a pastor down in Seal Beach to go to Soledad prison and do an imprison seminar from Washington, D. C. to call emanated. Of course, I didn't know why I was being asked to go do this. Prison fellowship was a relatively new organization, been around about two years, and I was asked to go teach for 40 hours. I was intimidated by the invitation, not so much intimidated by what a prisoner could easily do to me, but intimidated by the fact that I didn't know a whole lot about prison culture. I didn't know a whole lot about life on the streets, and I felt very inadequate going in.

And I prayed that they would reject me and therefore reject Christ in the message that I was trying to convey. And that frightened me. That particular weekend, I was speaking at a men's conference up in Northern the northwest part of our country, and I flew in late Saturday night in Monterey to meet the man that was to take me into the prison on Sunday morning and so forth. That night, we got a call at the motel room that there had been an incident in the prison.

Some inmates had captured two guards and put them through plate glass windows and hurt them very badly. And there was a lockdown in 90% of the prison, and it was touch and go whether or not we're going to have a seminar in the morning. Well, I showed up outside the gates of the prison with my Bible and my three piece suit and ready to go in there and give my Bible study

for 40 hours. I found out that 10% of the prison was open to us, and then that 10%, 90% were Spanish speaking. They were all Mexican aliens.

Had come across the border illegally, got in trouble in this country, and they were incarcerated in Soledad and I have muy pequito español. I learned my Spanish eating at El Torito, walked into the prison and there was about 40 inmates and 35 of those were Spanish speaking. And I began my seminar. I found a bilingual man and he was able to help me interpret. About the middle of the afternoon, a guy stands up right about here, just stands straight up in my meeting, and he's Mexican. He has a bandana around his head. He has his Cholo mustache and it goes down here like this. He gets up and he goes, hey.

And I looked over at him and I said, Me? And he said, hey! Like that again. And I said, I knew this would happen. I knew that I'd come in here and I would be martyred for the faith right here in this institution, and it's going to come down right now. And the guy said, Ay man, you know what? I said what? What would you say? Man, he says, I like you, man. I liked you. And he sits back now. And I said, thank you very much. I like you too. What was your name again? The next day, this guy walks in and behind him are about 25 guys that look exactly like him. And they're all walking in in a row and sit several rows right together.

And they were in the [inaudible] familia in that institution. They were a prison game. Learn something new every day. Second day they began opening a little more of the institution because they were going through and they were confiscating weapons. And by the way, in that particular lockdown, they confiscated 73 homemade weapons themselves. What they do is they have a total

lockdown in the prison. Nobody comes in and out of their cells. The meals are served to the men in their cells. And then they have a search. And what they do is there are six by nine cells in Soledad, and there are two men that occupy every cell.

That in itself is enough to cause a very violent, violent behavior to squeeze two human beings in a space like that. Then they'll pull these two guys out and they'll detain them with what they call the Goon squad. And that's about 15 guys, 15 prison officials that are pretty hefty. And they'll watch these guys and they'll search the entire cell and search these guys persons and so forth. And during that process they confiscated 73 weapons. And I stopped by the warden's office and I saw every one of them.

Guys are tremendously ingenious in this kind of endeavor. Well, on the second day I'm speaking and this black man stands up and starts walking toward me. Why wouldn't he be short? But he's about six seven. He has an Afro about like this, and he looks like he could handle me real easily. And he walks down and he stands up right next to my podium where my notes were. And he's looking down on me. And I'm trying to do this seminar.

I wish that somebody had written a manual. 50 Steps to Survival in an imprison seminar so I could flip the page and find out what happens when a man is standing looking over you. So I just kind of looked up at him and went. Everybody laughed. I was hoping he would laugh. He smiled. You know what he was doing? He just stopped by and he was waiting for me to stop speaking, so he could tell me that he was not trying to interrupt the seminar, but the men's restroom is behind the podium in this Chapel area right over there, and he was simply going to the restroom.

So he was standing there waiting for me to pause. So here I thought he was going up there to hurt me. The power of negative thinking. I tried to break up the seminar with a lecture and then a small group exercise. We had several volunteers from the community come in, and we tried to develop relationships with the people outside and the prisoners. During one of the small groups, I had the privilege of leading a Spanish speaking person to Christ because I found after hours several four spiritual laws in Spanish, and I read them to him in Spanish, and he wanted to receive Christ. And things began to roll for me in my spirit.

At the end of the seminar, the group stood up in mass and walked forward. And they asked me to kneel. And honestly, I really thought I was going to be executed. I thought it was a big game and they're going to kill me. They asked me to kneel. And then they laid hands on me and began to pray for my health and my success. And I have to be very honest with you. I kind of lost control of my emotions.

And from that moment on, I was hooked into this Ministry. I have never seen a more evil place in a prison. And I wouldn't even begin to tell you the things that I have learned that men do to men in those places. I wouldn't even begin that process, but it's evil, it's ugly, it's violent, it's sick. And Charles Feinberg once made a statement in Chapel over Talbot. He said, you know, the darker the night, the brighter the light. And he was describing the first century world, which was a world that was absolutely baptized in perversion. And the Christian message hit that first century world and things began to happen.

The Book of Acts described the activities of the early Christians as these who have turned the world upside down. Probably would have been better to say these who have turned the world right side up. But in the early Church they impacted their world. And we have not impacted our world since as Christians. It's quite an example, but I have seen things happen in prison. I have seen miracles take place in prison. Tomorrow, and the next day I'll be sharing directly out of the Book of Amos.

But I want to just share one scripture here in the Book of Micah 6:8, a scripture you could probably quote. He has told you, O man, what is good. Now that scripture comes from this series of thoughts in chapter six, verse eight, with what shall I come to the Lord, Micah 6:6. With what shall I come to the Lord and bow myself before the God on high? Shall I come to him with burnt offerings with yearling calves? You ever thought about that? What can I bring the Lord? What gift can I give him? What would please him?

Does the Lord take a delight in thousands of rams and ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I present my firstborn for my rebellious acts, the fruit of my body, for the sin of my soul? And then this amazing verse, verse eight, he has told you, O man, what is good and what does the Lord require of you, but to do what? But to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God.

I want to share with you some of the things I've learned about justice. I'm just learning. I'm not the authority here today. I'm just learning. What does the Lord require of you to do justice? You know, I mentioned the fact that we have not impacted the total world like the first century. And I

know that there are reasons. There are geographic reasons. There are other reasons. The world is much bigger and so forth.

But every time there has been a revival. And I have concluded this after considerable study. Every time there has been a revival. You know, where it's come from? The oppressed. Wesley, banned from the Anglican Church, took his message to the people who worked in the fields. And he went out to them when they started their day at five in the morning. And he preached to the poor, to the disenfranchised, to the oppressed, to the prisoners.

Many of us in this room are the product of the middle class. Most of us in this room have never been oppressed. Most of us in this room have never lived in a ghetto. My family and I in August moved to Washington D.C. Actually, it's Northern Virginia. It's 20 miles from Washington D.C. And if you've been to Washington D.C. You're very well aware of the fact that there are two Washington's. There are the monuments and the senators and the congressmen and the delegates and the ambassadors and all of this. And then surrounding it is 99% black poor people.

And just a few weeks ago, I went down into the district and I met with Myron Osberger a Mennonite pastor, President of the Mennonite Seminary in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, for a number of years, a man who lived in a very nice home, high up on a hill in Pennsylvania, overlooking the lush green area of the East Coast, and a man whose passion and whose soul was touched by the fact that there is so much suffering in Washington D.C. That he's now pastoring an inner city Church. I sat in his study and talked with him. We were on the tail end of this hurricane. I went through my first hurricane back there. Those are really fun.

And I'm sitting in his office and water is leaking on him and me and all over his books and his office. And he lives just a block from the Church in a roadhouse type place right in the middle of a very violent neighborhood. Really touched me. This man could be a pastor anywhere. He wanted to be. He's a very prolific writer. I don't know. 20-25 books? Very gifted communicator knows everybody in evangelical world. And here he sits, ministering to people he doesn't have to minister to. And the people love him and they respect him and they protect him.

Does this sound a little like verse eight? He has told you, O man, what is good. What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God? What does that mean? To do justice? Maybe it means something like Myron Osberger is doing. Maybe it means something like my boss, Chuck Coulson is doing. Chuck Coulson is the most brilliant man I've ever met. Quick, sharp, one moment chief consul to the President of the United States, next moment, federal inmate. When Chuck got out of prison, he was disbarred from his legal practice in the District in Washington D.C. He was disbarred in several major Metropolitan areas on the East Coast. But he was not disbarred in Boston, his hometown and other cities where he would have access. And he could be making six figures today as an attorney very very easily.

On a Christmas Day, when most of us are with our families, enjoying the warmth and love of our families, Chuck is in several prisons, spending it with prisoners. On Easter, when we're celebrating the resurrection of Christ, and again, the family is together for dinner and we're celebrating, Chuck is in a prison somewhere and Chuck is giving his life to the oppressed in prison.

And I know when we talk about prisoners, we get a lot of violent reactions. One in three people are touched by the criminal justice system. Many people are victims of crime. It's a tremendous problem. But I know this. That whenever the Church of Jesus Christ has given itself to the oppressed, to minister in the name of Jesus, we have had a revival and I know we can discuss the Methodist Church here today, and I know a lot of you would believe it. That is a Liberal organization. That is a large organization. There are 33,000 local Methodist churches. There are 11 million United Methodists, and the Methodist Church is large enough where it can accommodate Liberals and Conservatives and middle of the roaders. There are a lot of conservative Methodists. But wherever Methodism is today, that very Church is the legacy of one Charles Wesley, who gave his life to poor people.

Think about it. And he said to you, O man, what is good? What does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, to love kindness, to walk humbly with your God. Now Satan has his counterfeit for messages like this. One of the counterfeits is communism. And one of the sisters to communism today is something that you and I, being Christians and being students of the Christian faith run into liberation theology, where the end justifies the means, and no matter what it takes, you got to free of your oppressed. I read a quotation last week that blew my mind and I want to give it to you.

I made a mistake. Without doubt, an oppressed multitude had to be liberated, but our method only provoked further oppression and atrocious massacres. My living nightmare is to find myself lost in an ocean of red with the blood of innumerable victims. It is too late to save Russia. It is too late now to alter the past, but what was needed to save Russia were ten Francis of Assisi's.

You know who said that? Vladimir Eliot Lenin. I made a mistake. What Russia needed was ten Francis of Assisi's.

You know, I wonder out of this room if there wouldn't be one Wesley, one Francis of Assisi. If there wouldn't be ten that would give themselves and spend themselves like Myron Osberger in the inner city. I don't know. And again, I don't have the final answer. I just know that life moves on very, very rapidly, and the next thing we know, we're standing before the Lord, and we spent a lot of time on ourselves in the 60 or 70 years that we live and those that have really impacted society in the name of Christ have done so with the poor and the oppressed. Let me just share a few thoughts.

Little word study on the word justice and then the introduction will be over. You know the call for justice is one of the great themes that echoes throughout the Old Testament. We gain insight into this cry for justice through the Hebrew word *mispat* or *mispat*. This was a frequently used word, very rich in meaning. It was a legal term that also carried ethical and religious connotations. Today, for example, we have the criminal justice system. *Mispat* involved a morality over and above strict legal justice. It included observance of good custom or established practice, especially the practice of an equitable distribution of the land. Remember, this is Old Testament.

It was used constantly in conjunction with the Hebrew word for righteousness and the Biblical scholar Volchmar Heinrich believes the two concepts should be viewed as virtually synonymous. What? Justice and righteousness. This is vividly seen in the impassioned plea of Amos. Amos

5:24. Let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream. In Deuteronomy, we are told that Yahweh executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Deuteronomy 10:18. And again, the Psalmist declares, The Lord works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. Psalm 136.

This justice involved the wisdom to bring equitable harmonious relationships between people. Solomon prayed to receive wisdom to govern the people, and God responded, 1 Kings 3:11, you have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right. And that is the Hebrew word *misphat*. Justice. You have asked to discern what is right. You have asked for justice in your thinking. Political leaders were to exercise this quality of ethical compassion on behalf of all people. Micah accuses the rulers of Israel of economic cannibalism for their brutal injustice. In Micah 3:1-3, they eat the flesh of my people, chop them up like meat in a kettle, laments Micah. And Jeremiah was brokenhearted that justice could not be found anywhere in Jerusalem, though a person would search every street. Jeremiah 1:5.

There were repeated warnings against the failure to provide justice. Cursed be he who perverts the justice due to the sojourner, the fatherless and the widow. Deuteronomy 27:19. Cursed is he who does not act in accordance with justice. Great was the blessing promise to those who did exercise justice. Here's a promise. Psalm 146:7. Happy is he who executes justice for the oppressed, who gives food to the hungry. The prophet spared no quarter in denouncing the blatant failure of the people to do justice. The scathing denunciations of Amos are legion. Echoing throughout the book is the charge that they sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes. Amos 2:6.

He charges that the women oppress the poor and crush the needy in their lust for an even higher standard of living. Amos 4:1. The people were so filled with greed that they could hardly wait for the end of the Sabbath, so that they could make the ephahs small and the shekel great and deal deceitfully with false balances. Amos 8:4-6. Bribery was the order of the day, and just judges who spoke the truth were despised. Amos 5:10 and 12. Is it any wonder that Amos cried out let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream? Amos 5:24. While Amos was lashing out against Israel in the north and we're going to develop the Book of Amos during the next few days, Isaiah in the Southern Kingdom lamented these words. Everyone loves a bribe and runs after gifts.

Isaiah 1:23. Isaiah depicts a courtroom scene in which God is the prosecuting attorney who exposes the unjust practices of the rulers. What do you mean by crushing my people by grinding the face of the poor? Isaiah 3:13 through 15. Judah's oppression had extended all the way to official decrees in law books just as God had institutionalized a system of compassionate justice, though rulers had institutionalized a system of hardened injustice, for we read in Isaiah 10:1-2 woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees and the writers who keep writing oppression. We are told that God abhorred all of Judah's pious rituals because they lack social relevance.

The life pleasing to God is not found in a series of religious duties, but in obedience. The fast that God desired was for the people to loose the bonds of wickedness and let the oppressed go free. God's words to them were these share your bread with the hungry, bring the homeless poor into your houses. Isaiah 58:5-7. Among the prophets, there was no more plaintive or heartfelt cry than the voice of Jeremiah. He was called a weeping prophet and with good reason. How he

loved the great city of Jerusalem. He agonized over the sin of her people. He pled with them to repent. How brokenhearted he was when his own prophecies of destruction were fulfilled. He is a sad yet faithful figure in desperate times.

And like the others before him, Jeremiah call the people back to the ancient covenant with its stipulation. Jeremiah 22:3. Do justice and righteousness and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. Repeatedly, he called them to plead the cause of the fatherless and to defend the rights of the needy. But sadly he had to admit, you have eyes and heart only for your dishonest gain, for shedding innocent blood and for practicing oppression and violence. Jeremiah 22:17. The tragedy was that the exile could have been avoided if the people had turned in repentance to God. For we read in Jeremiah 7:5-7. If you truly execute justice one with another, then I will let you dwell in this place in the land that I gave of all to your fathers forever. But the exile did occur and the tragedy of it echoes throughout the centuries.

Injustice intertwined with idolatry forced God to send Israel into captivity. I'm going to wind down this afternoon by leaving you with one thought here. And the thought that I'm going to leave you with comes from a magazine article that appeared in Christianity Today in September 6, 1985, and the article is entitled Standing Tough Against All Odds. The article is written by Charles Coulson, and it's concerned with the life of William Wilberforce. It's interesting to me that Charles Coulson, a man who really did share in the power of the presidency of the United States. His office was right next door to the Oval Office, that his heroes would not be political figures these days. That his heroes, two of them at the top of the list. Charles Wesley and

William Wilberforce. Now, I want you to be honest with me. How many of you have never heard of William Wilberforce?

Raise your hands real high. Okay. I'm so glad you came to 130 elected. Who was William Wilberforce? I may spend a little more time with this. We'll knock off at 2:30 so you guys can run away. We may pick this up in the morning, but I want to introduce you to William Wilberforce. There was a long article in Christianity Today and I've given you the date already. William Wilberforce struggled for 40 years against slavery 200 years ago. This last July, I spent a week with the African Methodist Episcopal Convention in Cleveland, Ohio. 3 million AME folk and they have a University in Xenia, Ohio, called Wilberforce University.

This man gave his life and his wealth. He was a wealthy man to abolishing slavery in this animal, looking to advance in England. By the way, he is credited with the abolishment of slavery both in England and in the United States. He was attracted by the political arena. He was trained to be a politician. He was on his way to be a great politician until he was challenged by this great social evil that he witnessed. The article in Christianity Today talks about the success and the failures of the abolitionist movement. And William Wilberforce poured himself into this. It wasn't popular. And one of the reasons it wasn't popular was because a lot of the economic success of the British Empire depended upon slave labor and black people were considered chattel. In other words, they were considered equal to cattle and livestock under English law.

And this man began as a singular voice against this great social evil. And one night he was very discouraged. He had taken many setbacks in Parliament. He was being abused in the press. He

was being threatened and on and on with the price that's usually paid for standing against social evil of any kind. And as he was sitting up late one night, considering a very important speech he was to deliver the next day, as the candle flickered, a letter fell out of his Bible. He picked up this letter that he hadn't read in a long time. And he read it. And this is the letter. Unless the divine power has raised you up to be as Athanasius, Contra Mundo against the world, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that exorable villainy, which is the scandal of religion of England and of human nature, namely, slavery.

Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men. But if God before you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh, be not weary of well-doing. The letter was signed, your affectionate servant, John Wesley.

Our time is gone, but we will continue tomorrow with William Wilberforce and the book of Amos and the subject of social justice. Let's pray. Father in heaven, most of us in the room are products of white Anglo Saxon Protestantism. Most of us are middle class. Most of us have not suffered great injustices. And Lord, I think of the potential in this room and the resource that is here for good in a wicked world. And I think about the great heroes of the faith, men who have been imprisoned, men who have opposed oppression and men who have left us a legacy of justice that many of us know very little about.

And it's my prayer that few will surface in this room. Answer the clarion call to stand for justice and righteousness in a wicked world. And I pray Lord that perhaps some seed will be sown and that maybe a William Wilberforce, maybe an Amos, maybe a Wesley, maybe a Jeremiah will

take that seed, nurture it and allow it to spring forth in a life that will impact our world for good.

Lord, we all have so much to learn and I just pray that we will be teachable. May we leave our critical spirits somewhere else? May we be receptive to divine truth? For we pray in Jesus name and all God's people said. Have a great evening, folks. God bless you. Thank you.