



The Common Thread
*"Amos: Righteousness and
Justice Reimagined"*

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Amos 5:24 ESV—"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream."

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Above all else, righteousness is defined in scripture as a comparison or a modeling of how God thinks, what God says, and what God does.

In the meantime, before Christ we see the same tension within the ancient Israelites that we have today, except they were trying to keep the law to be righteous, which is often what we also try to do by creating new laws.

In other words, you can't be righteous outside of receiving God's righteousness, but you can't do righteousness outside of treating people as God treats them. Israel kept many parts of God's rules, but ignored treating people the way that God treated them, which was his definition of righteousness.

They worshipped because those idols' ways resonated with the brokenness of their own ways.

JUSTICE

God's justice is not just an enforcement of God's punishment for wrong. Yes, there is such a thing involved in God's justice, but this does not allow our participation. God is the only one who can enforce such justice in the world.

John 21:21-22 ESV--"When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"

Romans 14:4 ESV--"Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand."

He was showing mercy because he was reserving the "punishment" part of judgment for Himself on the cross. Now, justice for us is not pointing out all that is wrong in someone else, though there is a lot. Justice is showing the mercy of God to others, especially the poor and marginalized.

Amos 5:11 ESV—"Therefore because you trample on the poor and you exact taxes of grain from him, you have built houses of hewn stone, but you shall not dwell in them; you have planted pleasant vineyards, but you shall not drink their wine."

Romans 13:8 ESV—"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law."

God's justice says that we owe people a debt of love in direct proportion to the price Christ paid to redeem us.