

12/06/20 Day of the Lord

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/tEBc2gSSW04>

Read:

[Amos 5:4-27](#)

The [Day of the Lord](#) is an event in time when [God](#) brings judgment on oppressors in order to relieve the oppressed. The Passover event serves as an archetype to best understand this concept. In Exodus 12, we learn that God's judgment passed through Egypt to hold the nation accountable and passed over Israel to rescue them from death and slavery. God then instructed the people of Israel to observe Passover every year, so that they would remember his deliverance and defense of the afflicted. For Israel, the Day of the Lord was something to celebrate, until Israel began to resemble their former oppressors.

This brings us to the prophet [Amos](#), who exposes Israel's exploitation of the poor and calls on them to change. Israel is now engaging in the same corrupt ways of Babylon and Egypt. They have made themselves into God's enemy, and the Day of the Lord, which once brought their rescue, will now bring God's [justice](#).

Question 1:

What thoughts, questions, or insights came up as you read today's passage?

Question 2:

Compare the Passover event (Exodus 12:21-27) with the judgment heading towards Israel because of their corruption (Amos 5:16-20). Notice how the words "pass through" or "pass over" are used in both passages. What do you observe, and why is this significant?

Question 3:

Review Amos 5:21-24. God calls his people to show their love for him by loving others. So when Israel robs the poor while offering gifts of worship, God can't stand it and won't accept their gifts. How does Israel serve as a mirror for communal reflection and self-critique? Identify one specific area in your life, community, city, or country where love for people is neglected while religious rituals continue.

Question 4:

God urges his people to "let justice roll on like a river, and righteousness like a never-failing stream (Amos 5:24)." The Bible defines justice as actions that correct injustice, and righteousness refers to upholding the standard of right equitable relationships between people despite social differences. What is one practical thing you can do to act with justice and righteousness this week?

Question 5:

Turn your reading and reflections into a prayer from your heart. Thank God for providing a way to escape oppression and be honest about the ways you perpetuate or tolerate the oppression of others. Ask for courage to stand up for the poor and vulnerable in your community.

12/13/20 Psalms

Video Link: https://youtu.be/dpny22k_7uk

Read: [Psalm 88](#)

The book of Psalms communicates a story that follows the rise and fall of the Davidic kingdom, a renewed hope in Yahweh the king, and a righteous king to come. Psalm 88 comes at the darkest moment of the plot and expresses that despair tangibly.

Question 1:

As you read through Psalm 88, notice what griefs and pains the psalmist expresses. What stands out to you?

Question 2:

The psalmist does not hold back his grief or anger when he talks to God. How does that sit with you? Do you give yourself the freedom to express all your deepest emotions and thoughts to God. If not, what holds you back?

Question 3:

Have you ever found yourself in a place where the only prayer you can muster is “help?” Have you ever felt that deep loneliness that the psalmist expresses? What are your deepest pain points at the present moment? Write or pray out loud to God, even if your only prayer is “help.”

Question 4:

Have you ever read through the Psalter, or a group of psalms, looking for how they connect to one another? How does this idea sit with you? If you are interested, we’d suggest reading through some psalms and looking for repeated words and themes that link them. Starting with Psalms 1-2 is a great idea, or you could look at 88-90, the psalms brought up in our study today.

12/20/20 Strength

Video Link:

<https://youtu.be/9aaVy1AmFX4>

Read: [Matthew 6:19-34](#)

What do we have much of? Our “muchness,” or how much we have, can easily become what we love. But God calls us instead to use all that we are and have to love him and others. When we use our muchness in this way, it receives the joy and security of God’s own muchness and becomes even more valuable.

Question 1:

What did you observe as you read the passage? What beliefs and responses do you think this passage is inviting you to?

Question 2:

Think of all the experiences, challenges, talents, relationships, possessions, time, and health that you have. This is what you can think of as your muchness. List three to five specific examples of your muchness.

Question 3:

Sometimes we think our muchness is not very much, so we anxiously hoard it. Next to each of the things you listed in the above question, write one way you might be prone to worry.

1. How do these worries hinder you from using your muchness to love God and others?
2. Take some time now to admit your worries to God in prayer.

Question 4:

Jesus’ teachings remind us of our value and also of God’s [generous](#) provision to help us in times of distress or worry.

1. Next to each item on your list, write one way God has expressed his care and provision towards you.
2. Take time now to thank God in prayer.

Question 5:

Consider your list again. What would it practically look like to use your muchness to love God and others? What is one step you can take today? Remember that God is with you, strengthening you to carry it out.

12/27/20 Tree of Life

Video Link: <https://youtu.be/TJLan-pJzfQ>

Read: [Proverbs 3](#)

[Proverbs](#) is a letter from a wise father to his son. He speaks of the life-giving power of God's wisdom and compares it to the tree of life, warning of the dangers of proudly ignoring godly wisdom. (Note: Throughout Proverbs, God's wisdom is personified as a woman, so that's what "she" and "her" refer to in vv. 13-18.)

Question 1:

With all the good news that God's wisdom holds, why do you think it's so hard to follow it? Why do we so often choose to live by our own limited understanding?

Question 2:

Compare verse 7 with [Genesis 3:2-7](#). What do you observe? How can our eyes be deceived when defining good and bad?

Question 3:

Consider a time in life when you followed God's wisdom even though it defied your own understanding (see verses 5-8). What was that like?

Question 4:

Picture yourself resting under the tree of life, basking in God's wisdom. Pray and ask God to fill you with his wisdom, so you can be a tree of life for others (you can also check out [Proverbs 15:4](#)).