

## September 2025 – Justice and equality

Please note Bible stories and themes may occasionally differ from this overview.

Throughout September we hear what the Bible has to say to us about justice and equality. We explore how we should treat others by sharing God's **goodness**, showing **kindness** and **self-control** with our actions, showing love to others – including our enemies – and being **patient** as we wait to see God's Kingdom come.

### Session 1 6/7 September

**Aim: To recognise God's desire for justice and fairness in how we treat others, and to consider how we can bring justice and goodness to our communities**  
**Bible ref: Amos 5:24**

#### Today's fruit

God wants us to live in a world full of **goodness** and justice and wants our help to create that world today.

#### Bringing justice

This verse sits within many chapters of condemnation of injustice. The context is that Amos, along with many other prophets, is warning the Israelites that their future is bleak if they continue to treat others badly. The Israelites are looking towards the Day of Judgement – the Day of the Lord – with excitement, hoping that God will finally condemn their enemies. However, Amos tells them that they too will be seen and judged by God for how they have lived.

This verse expresses the desire and intention that God has: that justice should saturate their lives and everything they do, and that goodness should fill and impact their communities as a direct result. God is continuing to remind his people that worshipping him is not about songs and sacrifices, it's about loving God and loving others.

Where is the relevance of this in our own lives? Where are the injustices in the world today, and how does Jesus call us to tackle it? What is The Salvation Army doing to stop injustice? How can we join God's mission? Consider that fighting injustice can start with us, how we treat and think about others.

#### Think about

Prophets had an important job; they listened to God and shared his messages with people. In the Old Testament, before God's Holy Spirit was given to all believers, there were only a small number of people who could understand what God was saying. Can you remember who we learned about in August – someone else who could hear God's voice speaking?

Amos said a lot of things to the Israelites about how they were living. They were focusing on rules and punishment rather than loving God and each other. Their idea of justice was punishing someone who did something against their rules. God needed them to know that they weren't perfect either, because they weren't treating other people fairly, – they were not pleasing God. God wasn't happy with their worship to him because their hearts were full of anger and hatred towards other people.

I wonder if there are things in the world that we find unfair? Are there situations where we feel there should be justice? Are there things we can do to bring justice and fairness into the world?

Goodness is a fruit which God's Holy Spirit helps to grow in us. How does goodness and justice fit together? How might we show people God's goodness?

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## Session 2

### 13/14 September

**Aim: To reflect on what the Bible can teach us about how we treat others, and think about how we can live it out**  
**Bible ref: Micah 6:8; Zechariah 7:9-10**

#### Today's fruit

God calls us to show **kindness** to those who are being treated unfairly.

#### Showing mercy

These words from Micah and Zechariah are continuing to point us in the direction of living intentionally by remembering what God has asked of us, and living it out through love, kindness and compassion.

This well-known verse from Micah helps us to understand the importance of justice, mercy and humility. In the verses leading up to 6:8, Micah explains that God does not want burnt sacrifices, but rather he wants to see the hearts of people being changed. God wants people to put into action what they know to be good. We may not use animals for sacrifice any more, but sometimes we do try to offer God things that are not what he's asked for.

Zechariah continues exploring the themes of justice and fairness. Although Zechariah gives specific examples of people, the point is that we should be caring for those who are weak and vulnerable in our society without judgement or prejudice.

In both prophetic books there is a call to action. How do we live in a way that reflects God's Kingdom values of justice and mercy?

#### Think about

Today we meet two more people who shared messages from God with his people. Can you remember what Amos was saying? As we know from before, the Israelites found it difficult to understand what following God looked like. They continued to prioritise rules over relationships, which meant people weren't showing true love for God or others.

Both Micah and Zechariah were saying how important it was to God for us to be kind to others. Zechariah even made specific mention of people who were widows, orphans, people from other countries and those who were poor. This was because those were the kind of people who were often left out and not cared for by the community. I wonder if that's still true today?

With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can allow kindness to grow in our lives. What does it look like for us to show kindness to others?

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## Session 3

### 20/21 September

**Aim: To see how Jesus teaches about those who face difficulties, recognising that this includes us**  
**Bible ref: Matthew 5:1-12, 43-48**

#### Today's fruit

God wants us to have **love** in our hearts for others.

#### Kingdom blessings

##### Beatitudes

In Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks to the crowds about the blessings – also known as the Beatitudes. Here Jesus speaks of hope and promise. He describes those who are on the edges of society, those who have no power or voice in their communities, as being welcomed and empowered in God's Kingdom. Jesus also speaks about how people can live, so that they can be part of God's Kingdom: those who want good relationships with others, who want to fight injustice, and those who show generosity. However, Jesus also acknowledges that this won't be easy. As we strive to bring peace, we may be persecuted and misunderstood.

### Love all people

This is another big challenge set by Jesus: to love and pray for our enemies. As with the Beatitudes, this feels like it doesn't make sense. However, Jesus was teaching a new way to live. Those gathered would have known the law about loving your neighbour, but to love your enemy was radical. It was about intentionally choosing to let go of hatred towards someone and allowing God to bring peace into your heart and into the world. Jesus called us to follow God's example to us.

### Think about

Jesus climbed a hillside to speak to the people. He encouraged them with reassuring promises of how God cares for us when we are feeling sad, suffering or working for peace. His word for this care of God was 'blessed', and our translation today says 'happy'. He even taught them to treat their enemies as they would their friends!

The list helps us to understand what being part of God's Kingdom is like: it sometimes doesn't make sense, but Jesus wants us to know that when we are standing up for what is right – when we want to see justice and fairness and when we choose to love others – we are blessed. We are happy, because we know that we are living as part of God's amazing Kingdom.

Being 'happy' is not always a feeling where we want to laugh, run or sing. It can be a quiet feeling we have inside.

Loving and praying for our enemies is what Jesus is asking us to do. I wonder how you feel about that?

When Jesus was talking to the people, who do you think he meant when he was talking about their enemies? Jesus knew that loving those who were unkind and unfair was difficult, but he said that we could celebrate and be happy because we know we are living as God wants us to.

### 22 September to 5 October: Fairtrade Fortnight

This campaign highlights the need for fair prices and decent working conditions for all farmers and workers around the world. We pray that this will help bring more of God's justice and equality into the world.

## Session 4

### 27/28 September

**Aim:** To learn about John's vision, explore what some of the pictures mean and think about what it means for us to have hope in what is to come  
**Bible ref:** Revelation 4:1-3; 21:1-4

### Today's fruit

God can show us how to practise **patience** as we wait for answered prayer.

### A picture of Heaven

#### The new Jerusalem

John, one of Jesus' special 12 followers, was praying one day late in his life and heard a voice saying, 'Write down what I am showing you and share it.'

John 'saw' a picture of Jesus, who wanted to show him the future. It was a picture of a door opening into Heaven, with God surrounded by angels. Lots was happening – a battle between good and evil happening on the earth and God making judgement on anyone who had ever lived, with a great book of names. John also saw a new Heaven and a new earth. Out of Heaven came a new city called Jerusalem, glittering as if made from jewels. A river of crystal-clear water flowed through it and God lived there. John heard Jesus say, 'I will be coming soon.' These final words of the Bible are known as the book of Revelation because they reveal or show us something special. It is a kind of paradise, perhaps what the Kingdom of God looks like when all things are restored at the end of all time. The symbolic language and pictures described in John's vision can seem strange and be difficult to understand, but the overarching idea is that one day God will come to dwell with humanity and his new creation.

**Think about**

Do you prefer elaborate, complex patterns, or simple, calm design? Can you imagine the throne that John sees?

How do you feel about a world without sadness, crying and pain?

When John writes about the new Jerusalem or the new Heaven and earth, he's thinking about what it will look and feel like when God comes to be with his people forever, and everything is made right.

Have you ever had to wait for something that you were really excited about? What did it feel like? We are often told to be patient when we are waiting. Does being patient feel easy? What does being patient look like?

God's Holy Spirit can help us to show patience. John had a picture of Heaven which described the world without any sadness or pain. Do you think John wanted the world to be like that straight away? I wonder if you'd like the world to be like that now? We know that one day God will make all things right again; but with God's help we patiently wait, and we live in a way that helps God's Kingdom to be a reality now. I wonder what we can do to show God's loving Kingdom now?