

# ***Twenty-Third Sunday After Pentecost***



## ***The Lihue Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawaii***

*Ka Hale Pule 'O Na Lahui Apau . . .*

*Church Of All Peoples . . .*

*. . . Hele Pu Makou me Iesu Kristo*

*. . . Walking Together With Christ*

**November 8, 2020**

*The Lihue Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hawaii*

*4602 Ho'omana Road, Lihue, HI 96766*

*Rev. Joseph Paxton, Pastor – Clyde Miller, Lector*

*Rhonda Pabo, Organists – Mark Murie, Cantor – Tony Kment, Video/Audio*

*Church: (808) 245-2145 Fax: (808) 246-8626*

*E-Mail: [lihuelutheran@gmail.com](mailto:lihuelutheran@gmail.com) Website: [lihuelutheranchurch.com](http://lihuelutheranchurch.com)*

# Welcome to the Twenty-Third Week After Pentecost!

## **Introduction**

Today the prophet Amos calls for justice to roll down like waters. Paul urges us to encourage one another with the promised coming of the Lord. Jesus tells the parable of the wise and foolish bridesmaids. Surrounded by the faithful of every time and place, we celebrate Christ's coming in our midst in the word of life and the feast of victory—the marriage feast of the lamb.

## **Overview**

### **Trusting in God, Trusting with God**

Human beings are relational creatures. We are created to be in relationship with one another and with God. No one, no matter how independent or disconnected they may feel they are, functions completely outside the context of relationships. From the moment we are born we are thrust into relationship with people around us—the people who delivered us, the people who will be taking care of us in a hospital nursery, our family, and God. When we enter this world we do so forming relationships right from the start.

Relationships, healthy relationships, require a lot of work and care to continue. In particular, relationships require trust to grow and become mature. Relationships rooted in trust can bring out the best in us. Relationships rooted in anything else can bring out the worst.

Today's readings give us the chance to consider the trust required in the relationship between God and God's people. Moreover, we are invited to give thought to the consequences of replacing trust with something else: hubris stemming from trust in one's identity or work (in Amos), or hubris stemming from trust in others to sustain us rather than God (in Matthew). Paul reminds us that our relationship with God is cause for joy, even in the midst of sorrow, since we believe (trust) God's promise of eternal life through the living Lord Jesus.

## **Illustration**

### **Pop Culture**

As the holiday shopping season approaches, Black Friday will draw some people to dedicate hours to standing in lines in the cold to get great deals. Others will spend Cyber Monday searching for low prices and gift options that can be delivered, saving them a trip to the store. Some shoppers spend months picking out gifts here and there so the season is not so stressful. There are also those last-minute shoppers who will rush into stores the day before the family Christmas gathering, hoping to find something meaningful. Are there any insights to be drawn from the preparations the bridesmaids in the parable make—or don't make—and the ways our society prepares to celebrate Christmas? How does the church's preparation for Christ's coming look like the parable? How does it look like the shoppers?

### *Announcements*

1. Spiritual Direction – Opportunity to grow in faith and discovery God! Contact Liedeke Bulder
2. ALL CHURCH WORK DAY and Garden Ministry Launch – recap
3. Food distribution (LCC + LLC + LMC) – update and date (Nov 14 @ Vet's Center)
4. Food Bank distribution help – Thursday, November 19!
5. Youth Group – parent volunteers for weekly meals + sanitization assistance

### *Weekly Events*

1. Hybrid – Virtual + Local Youth Group
  - a. **Sunday, November 8**, 5:30-7:00pm, @ Fellowship Hall
  - b. **Zoom Link** - <https://zoom.us/j/92234312100>
2. College and Young Adults Ministry
  - a. **Tuesday, November 10**, 5:30-7:00pm @ Fellowship hall
3. Women's Book Study – Molokai'i
  - a. **Wednesday, November 11**, @ 7:30-8:30pm via zoom <https://zoom.us/j/96513446272>
4. Bible Study – “The Twelve” - Malachi
  - a. **Thursday, November 12**, @ 5:00-6:30pm @ Fellowship hall + Pupus and BYOB!
5. Centering Prayer with Liedeke Bulder
  - a. **Saturday, November 15**, @ 9-10am via zoom <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/9079773456>

### *Prayer Concerns*

Please remember these people in your prayers during the week: Karen Kinoshita, Jake Whisenhunt, Rick Rentz, Stan Weeks, Judy Hoffman, Norman Dibble, Marie Johnson, Minora Higa, Kazue Zaima, Virginia Hines-Aflague, John Mattek, Girald II (Bobby Girald's son), Kristie Schmid (Tony's sister), Lolli Hagen, Abraham Torres, Sr., Kristy Kahananui, Sonny Koerte, Joan Duarte Ebesu, Mallory Rodriguez, Steve Schantz, Leonarda Cadiz, Peter Alisna, Lea Cadiz, Tirzah Pope, John McIntyre, Pastor Matthew Weber, Joyce Anglemyer, Stephen Shioi, Peggy Hood, Jason Shimono, Richard Rasay, Nancy Nelson (formely Mandell), Karen & Patrick Pavao, Edward Rasay, Richard Duarte (Friend of Kurt Javinar), Karen Richards (friend of Nancy Mandell), Marcos Larson (Liedeke's son), Dora Jane Rowell, Franklin Parraga, Penny Parraga, Leticia Ancog (Kurt Javinar's sister), Yvonne Shinseki, Al Dressler (Larry's Father), Shirley Hallman (Denese Alcott's Mother), Mercy Ballesteros, Mike LaBerge, Anna Marie & Phil Croghan, Judy Carlson, Caroline Johnson, Sheila Belarmino, Ray Roderick, The Church Council, and leaders in the ELCA. If you have additional prayer requests, please let the church office know. “Ask it in my name . . .” Mahalo for your love.

### *Remembering our Military*

As we gather for worship, please remember those serving us in the military, and the families of our Hawai'i National Guard. These names have been given by loved ones and family members: Navy – TJ, Javinar, Kristian Matsumoto, Coast Guard - Brian Rodriguez, Navy - Kiana Alisna, Coast Guard - Ke'ale Renta Army - Jason Lumacad, Levi Fajardo: Air Force - Steven Javinar, Ikaika Fajardo, Army - Brandon Perkinson, Drew Cox, Tony Garton: National Guard - Benji MacKenzie, Eddie Resinto, Fred Casticimo, Philip Kamakea, Anthony Y. Torres, Master Sgt. If you know of someone you would like added to our prayer list, please advise the church office.

### *Social Justice as the New Gospel to be Evangelized*

In perhaps one of the most iconic verses drawn from the minor prophets, Amos 5:24 stands as the rallying cry for the oppressed. In today's discourse, social justice is the new gospel to be proselytized. Here, method matters. What I mean by this is the emphasis is not on what we know but what we do with what we know. Because how we go about social justice *is a matter of social justice in itself*. Read more at the end of our bulletin.

## Welcome, Check-In, and Announcements

Type into the Facebook chatbox and respond to one, or more, of the following four check-in prompts

### Moment of Mindfulness

Take a few moments to center your spirit and prepare for worship. This week, we remember the life, witness, and unending testimony of those who have gone to be with our Lord, pets included. Hold this moment in gratitude and grief, knowing that these saints rest in eternal peace.

### \*Order for Confession and Forgiveness

P We are gathered in the name of the Father, Makua, and of the + Son, Keiki Kane, and of the Holy Spirit, Uthane Hemolele.

**C Amen**

P Trusting in the mercy of God, let us confess our sin.

*Silence is kept for reflection*

P Faithful God,

**C have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We place our own needs before those of our neighbors. We keep your gifts of salvation to ourselves. Make us humble, cast away our transgressions, and turn us again to life in you through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

P God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through his death and resurrection Christ has made us his own. Hear the truth that God proclaims: Your sins are forgiven in the name of + Jesus Christ. Led by the Holy Spirit, live in the freedom and newness to do God's work in the world.

## Gathering Song

ELW 632

### O God, Our Help in Ages Past

1 O God, our help in a - ges past, our hope for years to come,  
2 Un - der the shad - ow of your throne your saints have dwelt se - cure;  
3 Be - fore the hills in or - der stood or earth re - ceived its frame,  
4 A thou - sand a - ges in your sight are like an eve - ning gone,

our shel - ter from the storm - y blast, and our e - ter - nal home:  
 suf - fi - cient is your arm a - lone, and our de - fense is sure.  
 from ev - er - last - ing you are God, to end - less years the same.  
 short as the watch that ends the night be - fore the ris - ing sun.

5 Time, like an ever-rolling stream,  
 bears all our years away;  
 we fly forgotten, as a dream  
 dies at the op'ning day.

6 O God, our help in ages past,  
 our hope for years to come,  
 still be our guard while troubles last  
 and our eternal home!

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674–1748, alt.  
 Music: ST. ANNE, William Croft, 1678–1727

### \**Apostolic Greeting*

P The grace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit,  
 be with you all.

**C And also with you.**

### \**Prayer of the Day*

P O God of justice and love, you illumine our way through life with the words of your Son.  
 Give us the light we need, and awaken us to the needs of others, through Jesus Christ,  
 our Savior and Lord.

**C Amen**

### \**First Reading*

*Amos 5:18-24*

*In the days of Amos, people thought that the day of the LORD would be a time of great victory, but Amos announced that it would be a day of darkness, not light. He said liturgy is no substitute for obedience. The LORD demands justice and righteousness in the community.*

<sup>18</sup>Alas for you 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 went into the house and rested a hand against the wall,

and was bitten by a snake.

<sup>20</sup>Is not the day of the Lord darkness, not light,

and gloom with no brightness in it?

<sup>21</sup>I hate, I despise your festivals,

and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.

<sup>22</sup>Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,

I will not accept them;

and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals

I will not look upon.  
<sup>23</sup>Take away from me the noise of your songs;  
 I will not listen to the melody of your harps.  
<sup>24</sup>But let justice roll down like waters,  
 and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.

A The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God.

*Psalm (to be read responsively)*

*Psalm 70*

You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry. (Ps. 70:5)

<sup>1</sup>Be pleased, O God, to deliver me;  
 O Lord, make haste to help me.  
<sup>2</sup>**Let those who seek my life be put to shame and confounded;  
 let those who take pleasure in my misfortune draw back and be disgraced.**  
<sup>3</sup>Let those who say to me "Aha!" and gloat over me  
 turn back because of their shame.  
<sup>4</sup>**Let all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you;  
 let those who love your salvation say forever, "Great is the Lord!"**  
<sup>5</sup>But as for me, I am poor and needy; come to me quickly, O God.  
 You are my helper and my deliverer; O Lord, do not tarry.

*Second Reading*

*1 Thessalonians 4:13-18*

*Some of the Thessalonians are worried that dead Christians will be excluded from the resurrection to eternal life when Christ comes again. Paul reassures them with the word of hope that all Christians, living or dead, will be raised into everlasting life with Christ.*

<sup>13</sup>We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters, about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. <sup>14</sup>For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. <sup>15</sup>For this we declare to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, who are left until the coming of the Lord, will by no means precede those who have died. <sup>16</sup>For the Lord himself, with a cry of command, with the archangel's call and with the sound of God's trumpet, will descend from heaven, and the dead in Christ will rise first. <sup>17</sup>Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up in the clouds together with them to meet the Lord in the air; and so we will be with the Lord forever. <sup>18</sup>Therefore encourage one another with these words.

A The Word of the Lord C Thanks be to God.

*Gospel Acclamation*

*Refrain*

Al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give thanks to the ris - en Lord;  
 al - le - lu - ia, al - le - lu - ia, give praise to his name.

## \*The Holy Gospel

## Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus tells a parable about his own second coming, emphasizing the need for readiness at all times.

P The Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew, the twenty-fifth chapter.



[Jesus said to the disciples:] <sup>1</sup>“Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. <sup>2</sup>Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. <sup>3</sup>When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them; <sup>4</sup>but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. <sup>5</sup>As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. <sup>6</sup>But at midnight there was a shout, ‘Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.’ <sup>7</sup>Then all those bridesmaids got up and trimmed their lamps. <sup>8</sup>The foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ <sup>9</sup>But the wise replied, ‘No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.’ <sup>10</sup>And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. <sup>11</sup>Later the other bridesmaids came also, saying, ‘Lord, lord, open to us.’ <sup>12</sup>But he replied, ‘Truly I tell you, I do not know you.’ <sup>13</sup>Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.”

P The Gospel of the Lord.



## Children’s Sermon

## Sermon

## Song of the Day

ELW 715

### Christ, Be Our Light



1 Long - ing for light, we wait in dark - ness. Long - ing for  
2 Long - ing for peace, our world is trou - bled. Long - ing for  
3 Long - ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long - ing for  
4 Long - ing for shel - ter, man - y are home - less. Long - ing for  
5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,  
warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,  
hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.  
has pow'r to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.  
bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.  
shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.  
to one an - oth - er, signs of your king - dom come.



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

Text: Bernadette Farrell, b. 1957

Music: CHRIST, BE OUR LIGHT, Bernadette Farrell

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## \*Apostles' Creed

**I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

## \*Prayers of the Church

**P** Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

**A** Holy God, rouse us to deep praise as we gather for worship. Enliven our worship with sincere and heartfelt song. Sustain the work of all church musicians and artists who lead us in praise and prayer (*especially*). Hear us, O God.

**C** **your mercy is great.**

**A** Holy Creator, surprise and delight us with the beauty of the world you have made. Bless the work of landscapers, architects, and artists whose work invites us into harmonious living with your creation. Hear us, O God.

**C** **your mercy is great.**

- A Holy Judge, let justice roll down like waters over this world. Reign over the courtrooms of every land, in the hearts of those who guard the law and those who stand accused of crimes. Be present in cases where we long for both justice and mercy to prevail. Hear us, O God.
- C your mercy is great.**
- A Holy Companion, console those who feel lonely or abandoned. Share the hours of those who live and eat alone. Comfort those who have few friends or who struggle with their identity and place in this world. Hear us, O God.
- C your mercy is great.**
- A Holy Protector, be with all observing Veterans Day. Guard the lives of active duty and retired military personnel. Comfort all who mourn those who have died in the line of duty. Heal the wounds, both physical and mental, experienced by service members. Hear us, O God.
- C your mercy is great.**
- A Holy and Immortal One, we pray in thanksgiving for the lives of all who have died. Remind us of the frailty and shortness of our own lives and inspire us to use them for the building up of your kingdom. Hear us, O God.
- C your mercy is great.**
- P Receive our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ our Savior, until that day when you gather all creation around your throne where you will reign forever and ever.
- C Amen**

## Queen's Prayer

The musical score is for the Queen's Prayer. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'Piano' and the second is labeled 'Pno'. Both systems are in 4/4 time. The lyrics are written below the notes in two lines: Hawaiian and English. The Hawaiian lyrics are: 'O kou a-lo-ha no A i-a i ka La-ni, A No-lai-la e ka-Haku Ma-la-lo kou e-he-u, Ko o kou oi-a i-o, He he-mo-le-le hoi ma-kou ma-lu-hi-a, A mau loa a-ku no. A-me-ne.' The English lyrics are: '1. O Lord thy Loving Mercy, Is high as the Heavens. It tells us of thy truth. And 'tis filled with holiness 3. For thy grace I beseech thee. Bring us 'neath thy protection. And peace will be thy portion Now and forever more. Amen'

### English Translation

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p>1. O Lord thy Loving Mercy,<br/>Is high as the Heavens.<br/>It tells us of thy truth.<br/>And 'tis filled with holiness</p> | <p>3. For thy grace I beseech thee.<br/>Bring us 'neath thy protection.<br/>And peace will be thy portion<br/>Now and forever more. Amen</p> |
|--|--|

## Sharing of the Peace

- P The peace of the Lord be with you always.
- C And also with you.**
- P Let us share peace in the Facebook live chatbox with one another.

## \*Offering Prayer

P Blessed are you, O God, maker of all things. You have set before us these gifts of your good creation. Prepare us for your heavenly banquet, nourish us with this rich food and drink, and send us forth to set tables in the midst of a suffering world, through the bread of life, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

C Amen.

## Offertory

Pastoral ministry might seem like something that *one person* does: the pastor. In our tradition, we are all pastors. This is the doctrine of the priesthood of *all* believers. While you may not be an ordained pastor, you are still a leader in ministry, called and baptized and sent to do great things. Your first vocational ministry is where God has called you to work. And sometimes, work becomes so fulfilling (or just time filling) that we aren't always able to get involved in the church in the ways we would like. Here is where you can partner with us in the ministries we support, so that, even though you're not carrying out the ministry, you support our work in your way.

Dear friends, in the times of COVID we invite those who are financially stable and able to move into a greater partnership with us in this season do so through the giving of gifts, tithes, and offerings. This work *is not possible without your support!* We invite you to pray in this season and discern how God might be inviting you to grow in your giving and support to Lihue Lutheran.

If, in this discernment, God puts it on your heart to give, donations can be made online, mailed in, or given on our website [here](#) or you can copy and paste the weblink below @

[https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco\\_ver3.vps?appver3=tYgT1GfNxRUIiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydsksODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3](https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Vanco_ver3.vps?appver3=tYgT1GfNxRUIiimjHMvORYXmm3bazY6GfrmTtVDZydsksODEa-Up5lt373GHnco2evTpo0mld6BrVzd2nG0p8xSFKZ9u6c4AzLo4CjNx7k=&ver=3)

## Offertory Song

## Lord of Aloha

God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma - ker of beau - ty and source of the breeze,  
5 King of Cre - a - tion, an - cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.  
9 Auth - or of mer - cy, Giv - er of grace, Bles - sed Re - deem - er who died in our place, Fath - er of one O  
14 ha - na are you, Lift - ing our voic - es we sing "Al - le - lu" Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

19  
  
 God of the is - lands, Lord of the seas, Ma-ker of beau-ty and source of the breeze,

23  
  
 King of Cre - a - tion, an cient and new, Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

27  
  
 Lord of A - lo - ha we wor - ship you.

## Sacramental Remembrance of Communion

### \**Lord's Prayer* (spoken in unison)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

### \**Blessing*

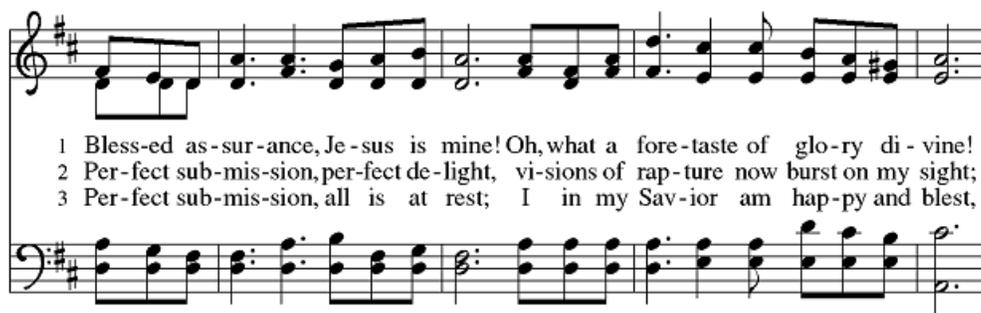
**P** May the God of all creation, in whose image we are made, who claims us and calls us beloved, who strengthens us for service, give you reason to rejoice and be glad. The blessing of God, Sovereign, † Savior, and Spirit, be with you today and always.

**C** Amen

## Sending Song

ELW 638

### Blessed Assurance



1 Bless-ed as-sur-ance, Je-sus is mine! Oh, what a fore-taste of glo-ry di-vine!  
 2 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, per-fect de-light, vi-sions of rap-ture now burst on my sight;  
 3 Per-fect sub-mis-sion, all is at rest; I in my Sav-ior am hap-py and blest,

Heir of sal - va - tion, pur - chase of God, born of his Spir - it, washed in his blood.  
 an - gels de - scend - ing bring from a - bove ech - oes of mer - cy, whis - pers of love.  
 watch - ing and wait - ing, look - ing a - bove, filled with his good - ness, lost in his love.

*Refrain*

This is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long:

this is my sto - ry, this is my song, prais - ing my Sav - ior all the day long.

Text: Fanny J. Crosby, 1820–1915  
 Music: ASSURANCE, Phoebe P. Knapp, 1830–1908

## Dismissal

A Beloved of God, go in peace to love and serve the Lord !

**C Thanks be to God**

## Upcoming Commemorations

Søren Aabye Kierkegaard, teacher, died 1855

Wednesday, November 11, 2020

Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian whose writings also gave rise to the modern philosophy of existentialism. He frequently attacked the complacency of the state church of his day, as well as its desire to be accepted by polite society rather than be a stumbling block.

# THE NEW EVANGELISM

I think we can all agree that blatant forms of aggression and violence are morally wrong. For example, if someone were to watch someone physically aggress against someone else for no reason, it is very clear who the perpetrator is and who the victim is. In addition, it is very clear who is at fault.

The problem with conversations in social justice is that they often employ sociological language that, unless you've been educated in this tradition or socialized into it by way of one's own intersection – race, class, gender (identity), socio-economic status, sexual orientation – it is going to be very hard to meaningfully participate in the conversation.

Think of social justice like math. One learns math in sequential phases. Addition and subtraction are learned before multiplication and division and these rudimentary formulas must be learned before more complex formulas can be understood, like Algebra, Geometry, and Calculus.

In the same way, learning about social justice occurs in sequential phases. And one cannot just “jump in” to the conversation. There are concepts (glass ceiling/escalator, sexism, homophobia, xenoracism, WAP – white adoptive parent, TERFS – transexclusionary radical feminists, etc.), theories (critical race theory, intersectionality theory), and approaches (womanism, feminism, etc.) that must *first be learned* before one can **meaningfully enter into dialogue with others**. In addition, critical reflexivity, is a process and a practice one must engage while entering into the difficult conversations of social justice.

Critical reflexivity is the process and practice of challenging one's own assumptions about one's thoughts and theories about one's self, others, and the world around them. Critical reflexivity is about increasing *awareness* that frees one from perspectival biases like the actor/observer difference, self-serving bias, mental shortcuts like stereotyping and heuristic processes, and hasty generalizations.

A major problem with social justice is that often times we harm others in ways that we do not see, feel, or understand. This is why critical reflexivity is important because it gives us time to critically reflect on our interpretation, perspective, feelings, and experience to interrogate what we know in light of another person's experiences. In this difficult dialogue, we listen empathically to others to gain a different perspective about ourselves (and the groups we belong to – race, gender, class, etc.) and develop alternative and/or additional ways of seeing ourselves, others, the world around us, and even God.

The problem with structural violence (key term) and systemic sin (key term) it's nature and essence is embedded in societal structures, group practices, norms, and values, and institutions like government, the church, education, marketing, housing, etc., so that it systematically benefits one person, or group, over and against another person or group. This produces what sociologists call an *inequality* (difference in distribution and/or access to resources) and an *inequity* (qualitative difference in how policies, procedures, and societal practices effect some and not others).

In the cultural conversations I've observed in society there are three camps. The first are the group of individuals who are leading this conversation. The second are those who are participating in the conversation, who are working to do the hard work of critical reflexivity. The third are individuals who defend against the concepts, terms, and theories used to describe this third group and actively resist members who try to explain and reveal to this third group how systemic and structural violence affects (and infects) this third group. The goal of this dialogue is to help others *see more clearly* the way they both actively and passively participate in the systemic and structural violence of others – and how this leads to oppression in its various forms.

I will say, however, that these conversations often feel like imprecations. Rather than gently evangelizing, social justice is a gospel that is sometimes force-fed, throw-at, or “jammed” down the throats of unsuspecting recipients. In the same way that nobody likes to be preached at with the Christian Gospel, I would also suggest that nobody likes to be preached at with the social justice gospel. What I mean hear is, throwing out and weaponizing social justice terms to try to accuse, aggressively and arelationally convince someone they're a racist, homophobic, or privileged, is likely to anger, upset, and confuse someone.

In the same way that the Gospel needs to be lovingly shared with people so that they can see, understand, and come to know what is being shared, why what is being shared is important, and be convinced of it's veracity (truth), the gospel of social justice needs to be lovingly shared with others as well – instead of thrown at or jammed down the throats of unsuspecting others.

So, what does it mean to “let justice roll down like waters?” First, it means doing your research to learn about the core concepts, theories, terms and terminology, and then finding places to learn and dialogue with others. Second, it's important to recognize that social justice is a formational process. We all have “privilege,” a term I'm reticent to use because it turns off the very people who need to be a part of the conversation, and the journey inward, in critical reflexivity, is a hard one. In many ways, it's like math. It can be really hard to understand, get the hang of, and become good at. For some its easy, for others, it takes a lot of time and effort – and even after all that, one still may not be good at. But the important thing is that one shows up and one tries. We don't do social justice alone, we do it as a group; in the same way that we aren't the church alone, we do it together as a group – and some are better at it than others. Third, it means being humble enough to stop, think, take someone else's perspective, and do the hard work of wrestling with the reality that one might be a perpetrator of injustice and not even know it. In the same way that people can be asymptomatic with COVID, people can feel fine, feel like good people, but live and act in ways and participate in systems and structures of society that harm others and not even realize it.

Ultimately, we can do one of two things. We can either receive the prophetic words being spoken in society about different social justice issues, and do the hard work of trying to confront it and reform it, or we can deny it, fight against it, and even become violent in response to it. If one takes the latter, that is common too. Pretty much every society that receives a prophet typically doesn't like what is being said so they try to stop it, silence it, or remove it – this is history of *all of the prophets*. But again, I'll throw in this last critique, social justice is a gospel. It doesn't have to be offensive, like many make it to be. It can be enlightening, informing, transforming, and life-giving to all – like The Gospel is meant to be. And that's my hope, that we can draw near to social justice in the Word of God to *let justice roll down*.