

Southern Adventist University

KnowledgeExchange@Southern

The Main Thing Devotional

Chaplain's Office

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True Religion

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“Do what is good and run from evil so that you may live! Then the Lord God of Heaven’s Armies will be your helper, just as you have claimed. Hate evil and love what is good; turn your courts into true halls of justice. Perhaps even yet the Lord God of Heaven’s Armies will have mercy on the remnant of his people.” Amos 5:14 NLT

True Religion

Have you ever experienced something that made you say, “That was absolutely unacceptable!” Maybe you craved a midnight snack and drove to Taco Bell only to discover *everyone* in Collegedale had the exact same idea! Maybe you’ve recently discovered the person you’ve been talking to has suddenly ghosted you? Maybe you’ve been at the dinner table when a family member made a racially derogatory comment? Maybe you’ve listened to a friend confide that she’s had a nonconsensual experience?

In Amos 5, God declares three things, which are unacceptable:

1. The oppression of the poor is unacceptable (vv. 7-14).
2. Complacency is unacceptable (v. 18).
3. Superficial religion is unacceptable (vv. 21-23).

I invite you to read the chapter for yourself and dive into it more fully, but in short, God was challenging the worship of His people. What is *true* religion? “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God means caring for the orphans and widows in their distress and refusing to let the world corrupt you,” James 1:27. Israel was certainly living beneath a pious veneer of religiosity—worshipping idols and oppressing the poor.

“We can sing all the most powerful worship songs we can muster, and have the best preaching or theology. We can have great faith that will ‘move mountains.’ But if we do not look out for and demonstrate love toward the marginalized and oppressed in our midst, our religion is meaningless.”
-Unknown

As we recognize Black History Month, I reflect on the countless individuals such as Claudette Colvin, Dorothy Height, Gordon Parks, Jane Bolin, Ruby Bridges, Mae Jamison, Harriet Tubman, James Baldwin (and so many more) whose sermons, lectures, determined work, and courageous actions working on behalf of the oppressed have been an expression of true religion. As you keep the Main Thing, the main thing in your life, may the Holy Spirit work through your words and actions to “let justice roll!” (Amos 5:24) here on earth until the day our King comes to take us home.

Reflections:

- What are you doing to establish justice today?
- What is keeping you from doing something?
- Are you complacent? (Have other concerns taken God’s place in your life? Do you ignore those in need either individually or systematically?)

NEWS & RESOURCES

- **Join us for BCU Vespers tonight -**
 - **6:30 pm:** <https://southern.zoom.us/j/95186680742>
 - **8:00 pm:** <https://southern.zoom.us/j/93458504346>
- Follow @saucampusministries on Instagram for updates on events and programs as well as encouraging messages!
- Coming back to campus you may already feel anxious or have experienced loss or grief over the holiday break. Call **423.236.2782** to talk to a counselor on campus for free.

- Do you need spiritual support or prayer? Talk with Chaplain [Anna Bennett](#) or [Joseph Khabbaz](#). Blessings,

Anna Bennett