

John Wesley:

But let justice roll on like a river,
righteousness like a never-failing stream!

Amos 5:24

There is no doubt that the God who lovingly created each one of us and daily sustains us is worthy of honour and glory and praise from the very beings whom He has created. But what is the best way to honour, glorify and praise our God? People come up with many different answers to that question.

During the time of the prophet Amos, God's people were doing many things that we would probably consider the right thing to do; they were gathering in religious assemblies and holding religious feasts, they were bringing burnt offerings and grain offerings, they were bringing choice fellowship offerings, they were singing and making music on harps but God tells them that He wants none of these things and then goes on and tells them what He would rather have: He wants rivers of justice and streams of righteousness! Streams in Israel are sometimes called wadis. A wadi can be a dry river bed one day, a raging torrent the next and a shallow stream the next. Wadis are thus not very reliable. In the verse before us today God is looking for a never failing stream, in other words it's always there and it is reliable. This is what He wants our righteousness (for righteousness you can read obedience to God's will) to be like, never failing, always there and reliable. It is interesting that God seems to want streams of righteousness but rivers of justice. Streams flow into rivers, don't they? Obedience to God always seems to involve our seeking justice in the lives of others. We cannot claim to be living in obedience to God's will while at the same time living in the midst of a situation of injustice towards others and do nothing about it. Where there is any form of injustice, born-again Christians are called to seek and work for justice.

Looking to our own obedience to God's will and working for justice in the world around us are some of the ways in which we bring salt and light into the world around us. They are also some of the most effective ways of bringing honour, glory and praise to our God.

Whate'er our pardoning Lord
Commands, we gladly do,
And guided by his sacred Word
We all his steps pursue.
His glory our design,
We live our God to please;
And rise, with filial fear divine,
To perfect holiness. (93)