

RESOURCES

SOCIAL JUSTICE

Worship Aids



## Social Justice – Worship Aids

### SCRIPTURE

Psalm 72

Psalm 146

Isaiah 46

Isaiah 58

Micah 6:6-8

James 1:27

Jeremiah 29



## MUSIC

*Come let us sing, Praise to our King* (Charles Silvester Horne, SASB 166)

*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* (Charles Wesley, SASB 79, VU 2)

*Come, Now, You Blessed* (Ruth Duck, VU 592)

*Crown Him with Many Crowns* (Matthew Bridges, Godfrey Thring, SASB 156, VU 211)

*Hail to God's Own Anointed* (James Montgomery, VU 30)

*Jesus Shall Reign* (Isaac Watts, SASB 160, VU 330)

*Lord Make Me an Instrument* (wrds: St. Francis of Assisi, music: John Rutter)

*Make Me a Channel of Your Peace* (Sebastian Temple, VU 684)

*Now Quit Your Care* (Percy Dearmer, VU 109)

*Put Peace into Each Other's Hands* (Fred Kaan, MV 173)

*The Church of Christ in Every Age* (Fred Pratt Green, VU 601)

*The Lord's Prayer* (SASB 624, VU 960)

*The well is deep* (Albert Orsborn, SASB 351)

*Thy Kingdom Come, O God!* (Lewis Hensley, SASB 172)

*We are the hands of Christ* (David Fraser, SASB 851)

*What Does the Lord Require of You* (Jim Strathdee, VU 701)

SASB – Salvation Army Song Book

VU – Voices United

MV – More Voices

## PRAYER

### *Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi*

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
and where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master,  
grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood, as to understand;  
to be loved, as to love;  
for it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

Amen.

### *Alternative Prayer Litany*

Leader: God, You created the earth and everything in it. You created each flower, each animal, each person and call it all Your own. Your designed perfect systems in order to sustain Your creation with clean air, clean water and enough food. You called it all 'good'. You were the King of that garden and the Father of all its inhabitants.

[silent and spoken prayers of thanksgiving for God's good gifts]

Leader: God our Father,

All: *Let justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never-ending stream.\**

We defiled that Garden and began to destroy it and its inhabitants. We were not satisfied with our place in that system, we did not want to listen to you and do what You asked of us. We have tried to claim your power for ourselves. We have gone looking for love and acceptance apart from you. We have turned the world upside down. We deserve Your wrath. We ought to receive your punishment.

[silent and spoken prayers of confession and lamentation about the state of the world and our role in destroying it]

Leader: God our Father,

All: *Let justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never-ending stream.*  
But instead of vengeance, You offer us grace; instead of anger you offer us compassion; instead of the kind of justice we have earned you offer us a justice we cannot understand. We plead for your forgiveness. We hope for your compassion. We need you love and healing. We long for you to show us how to show the same mercy to others.

[silent and spoken prayers for ourselves]

Leader: God our Father,

All: *Let justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never-ending stream.*

Not only for ourselves, but we also pray for the world. We ask for Your compassion, Your justice, Your righteousness not only to rule our own lives, but also to hold sway over the whole world.

Leader: For victims of war.\*\*

All: Have mercy.

Leader: Women, men and children.

All: Have mercy.

Leader: The maimed and the homeless.

All: Have mercy.

Leader: The imprisoned and the tortured.

All: Have mercy.

Leader: The widowed and the orphaned.

All: Have mercy

Leader: The bleeding and the dying.

All: Have mercy

Leader: The weary and the desperate.

All: Have mercy

Leader: The lost and the forsaken.

All: Have mercy

[silent and spoken prayers for individuals, groups and countries who are suffering]

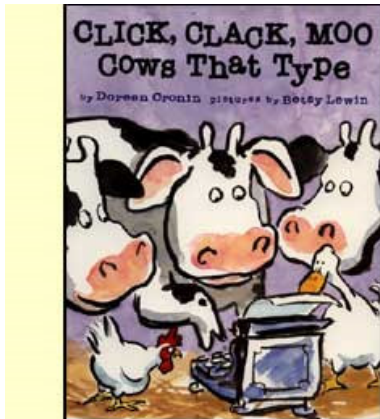
Leader: God our Father,

All: *Let justice roll like a river and righteousness like a never-ending stream.*

\*This refrain comes for Amos 5:24

\*\* This section of the prayer is an excerpt from the *Litany of Resistance*, by Jim Loney and Brian Walsh, included in Appendix 4 of *Jesus for President*. (See social justice resource list.)

## CHILDREN'S TIME



### *Click Clack Moo*

Read this story to children in your congregation and then discuss how they too can make things change in their world by recognizing a problem that needs fixing, gathering people together and doing something about it, even if it's simply writing letters to people in charge or anyone who can help. Talk about what kinds of things need fixing in the world and how like David who faced Goliath in the Bible, no one is too little to make a big difference.

### "SINGING SONGS OF JUSTICE...."

Here are some selections from our play lists that explore themes of social justice. Give them a listen, or play them for reflection time during worship.

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| Jars of Clay   | Oh My God  |
| Bob Dylan      | Times They are Changin'<br>Gotta Serve Somebody    |
| U2             | Yahweh   |
| Jon Foreman    | Somebody's Baby<br>Instead of a Show               |
| Derek Webb     | This Too Shall be Made Right<br>Rich Young Ruler   |
| Caedmon's Call | Share in the Blame<br>All Across the Western World |
| Tim Hughes     | God of Justice                                     |
| David Crowder  | Surely We Can Change                               |
| John Mayer     | Waiting on the World to Change                     |

## SERMON

### PSALM 72 – The Salvation Army, Belleville. By James Pedlar

Community and Family Services Sunday, November 13, 2005

#### Psalm 72, New International Version

Of Solomon.

- 1 Endow the king with your justice, O God,  
the royal son with your righteousness.
- 2 He will judge your people in righteousness,  
your afflicted ones with justice.
- 3 The mountains will bring prosperity to the people,  
the hills the fruit of righteousness.
- 4 He will defend the afflicted among the people  
and save the children of the needy;  
he will crush the oppressor.
- 5 He will endure as long as the sun,  
as long as the moon, through all generations.
- 6 He will be like rain falling on a mown field,  
like showers watering the earth.
- 7 In his days the righteous will flourish;  
prosperity will abound till the moon is no more.
- 8 He will rule from sea to sea  
and from the River to the ends of the earth.
- 9 The desert tribes will bow before him  
and his enemies will lick the dust.
- 10 The kings of Tarshish and of distant shores  
will bring tribute to him;  
the kings of Sheba and Seba  
will present him gifts.
- 11 All kings will bow down to him  
and all nations will serve him.
- 12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out,  
the afflicted who have no one to help.
- 13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy  
and save the needy from death.
- 14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence,  
for precious is their blood in his sight.
- 15 Long may he live!  
May gold from Sheba be given him.  
May people ever pray for him  
and bless him all day long.
- 16 Let grain abound throughout the land;  
on the tops of the hills may it sway.  
Let its fruit flourish like Lebanon;  
let it thrive like the grass of the field.
- 17 May his name endure forever;  
may it continue as long as the sun.  
All nations will be blessed through him,  
and they will call him blessed.
- 18 Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel,  
who alone does marvelous deeds.

- 19 Praise be to his glorious name forever;  
may the whole earth be filled with his glory.  
Amen and Amen.  
20 This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.

This morning as we think about Family Services ministries, I want us to return to the text that was read to us earlier - Psalm 72.

## I. A PSALM FOR A KING

The first thing that needs to be said about this passage is that *this is a Psalm for a king*

It is quite obvious, from the very opening of the Psalm, that it is written for a king. What king is it actually intended for?

We have an inscription at the top of the Psalm, which should be included in your Bibles, which says, "Of Solomon." Some think that this means it was written "by Solomon"; or it could be that it was written "about Solomon" or "for Solomon."

Either way there are a lot of things about this Psalm that seem to indicate that it was written for or about Solomon. He was of course the "royal son" of verse 1, the first heir to the throne in Israel's history. He did lead Israel in its most prosperous time (verses 3 and 16); the wealth and prosperity of Solomon's kingdom was extravagant; He also led in a time of great peace, when the influence of Israel was great among the other nations (verses 9-11); it was in his rule that the geography of the kingdom was at its greatest (verse 8); and of course gold from Sheba was brought to him when the Queen of Sheba visited him (verses 10 and 15).

We also see the promise that Solomon would endure through all generations in verse 5 and 17. This is in fact a repetition of the promise that God made to David in 2 Sam 7:12-14. In this very important passage, Nathan prophesies to David that his son would sit on a throne which would be established forever.

Now here is the problem: Solomon died, and if you remember the stories from 1 Kings, you'll know that his kingdom quickly fell apart. Solomon ended up worshipping idols, and all that he had built for the people of Israel started to crumble after his death; within a few hundred years it was totally gone.

So how are we supposed to read this Psalm? Solomon's dead, his kingdom is no more. What happened to the promise of a king who would rule forever?

## II. A PSALM FULFILLED IN CHRIST, THE TRUE KING

As Christians, we can see that *this Psalm points to Christ as its ultimate fulfilment*

As with all the promises we read about in the Old Testament, we as Christians look to Christ for the fulfillment of this Psalm; Christ is the true King. Even the best kings of the Old Testament only give us a shadowy picture of what God's anointed ruler should be like: Jesus Christ fulfills it completely.

First of all, there is the extent of his rule. Christ's reign does endure as long as the sun, as we read in verse 5 and 17 (and as promised to David in 2 Sam 7); he does rule from sea to sea, as it says in verse 8; all kings will one day bow to him, as promised in 11; and all nations are blessed in him, as promised in verse 17 – a reiteration of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12.

These are all things we would expect of a great king; power, authority, rule over everything, longevity, endurance. But we have still not talked about the other theme of this Psalm, the one that is somewhat "unexpected" as a description of a king.

In fact, the most prominent feature of the rule of the king in this Psalm is not his power, his authority, his endurance, or his might. The most prominent feature of his rule is *his concern for the poor*. The defining feature of *this* king is the way that he acts on behalf of the afflicted, the needy, the poor, and the oppressed.

Take a look at the text: In verse 2 he is the one who will "judge your people in righteousness / your afflicted ones with justice." In verse 4 again he is the one who will "defend the afflicted among the people / and save the children of the needy; / he will crush the oppressor." Again as we read on in verse 11ff:

*11 All kings will bow down to him*

*and all nations will serve him.*

*12 For he will deliver the needy who cry out,*

*the afflicted who have no one to help.*

*13 He will take pity on the weak and the needy*

*and save the needy from death.*



*14 He will rescue them from oppression and violence,  
for precious is their blood in his sight.*

Notice that little three letter word at the beginning of verse 12: FOR, meaning here, “because”. This is an unbelievable statement: All the kings of the world will bow down to him, not because of his military might, not because he will force them to, but *because* he cares for the poor! *Because* he helps those who have no one to help! *Because* he takes pity on the weak and needy! *Because* he saves the needy from death, and rescues them from oppression and violence! This is what demands the respect of world leaders – not a show of might, but a show of mercy.

What a strange kind of rule! What a strange kingdom! What a wonderful king! Though he has power to crush anyone at will, he instead reaches out and cares for the needy. Our understanding of power is naturally just the opposite.

Doesn't this sound just like Christ's ministry while he was here on earth? He did not court the halls of power, but spent his time with the poor, with the sick, with prostitutes and tax collectors, he spent his time with the oppressed, showing them mercy, healing, and bringing them hope and peace. He came to earth saying “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of heaven! Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.” He is the one who began his public ministry by going into the synagogue and reading Isaiah 61:

*“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.”*

And then he said, *“Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

*This is what Christ's kingdom looks like!* A place where the weakest people are considered. A place where those who cannot help themselves are helped. This is the hope that we have for the future – that one day Christ will return and establish his kingdom forever – a new heavens and a new earth, with no more oppression, poverty, and affliction.

### **III. THE AFFLICTED IN OUR MIDST**

It is easy for us today to turn a blind eye to the afflicted in our midst. But they are here. They are here in this very community. We are tempted to believe that in our country everyone has an

equal chance, and that those who fall behind in Canada are just slackers; that they just haven't worked hard enough, or else they'd have made something of themselves.

But it is not that simple; in spite of the fact that we do live in a wonderful country – certainly the greatest place to live on this planet, as far as most of us are concerned – we still have a society that includes affliction, poverty, need, and oppression.

Some of the people we help at Family Services have just made bad choices, it's true. But most of them are dealing with many problems that you and I couldn't hope to understand unless we walked in their shoes.

I think of a middle aged man who came to us this summer. He started coming to the lunch program. Always polite, well groomed, clean, and articulate. I wondered what had brought him to the point of coming to us for a free lunch. Gradually over the course of a few weeks he opened up to me and told me some of his problems. He had worked as a cook for many years, until a serious injury put him on long term disability. He described how he had struggled with self-doubt and shame, after years of being unable to work; "After a while," he said, "you start to feel like you've got no reason to get up in the morning." As a result of his injuries, he had developed significant mental health problems – substance abuse issues, depression, and anxiety disorder. The man wanted to move on; he had actually moved to Belleville to start attending Loyalist College, but after a week he had dropped out because he could not handle the stress of completing his assignments.

I think of another, older gentleman. Again, a very polite man, rather articulate – seems able to carry on an intelligent conversation about many different topics. You would wonder why he is coming to The Salvation Army for a free meal. I would still be wondering, if someone hadn't told me that he was schizophrenic.

I think of a single mother who works at Tim Hortons. Her three children could never hope to survive on what she makes working there; she works hard – but how is she supposed to provide for her family with the pay she gets from that job?

When we think about working for God's kingdom on earth, do we think of these people? I'll confess, that this is not the first thing that comes to mind when I think of advancing the kingdom of God on earth. Maybe I think of raising the profile of our church, of preaching to large crowds of people, of holding crusades and putting up big buildings! That sounds exciting!

But God's kingdom is different. It's a place where the afflicted are defended. It's a place where the weak and needy are cared for. If we are about the Kingdom of God, then we need to be about caring for these people.

That's why we do what we do at Family Services. That's why we help the needy. Not only as a "means-to-an-end" of sharing our faith with them. Not simply an act of charity that gives us a warm fuzzy feeling – we are participating in the reign of Christ, the King who cares for the afflicted; we are patterning our lives after his rule – he whose power is demonstrated most clearly in showing mercy and kindness.

That's why we give food to the hungry; that's why we feed thousands of people every year at the Lunch Room and the Warm Room. That's why we provide the homeless with a place to lay their head at night. That's why we help struggling single mothers by giving them clothing for their children. That's why we are collecting coats right now to give out at the end of the month.

We care because Christ cares – because this is what *God* is like; this is what the kingdom of God looks like – not building up an empire, but giving freely to those who have need.

And this is why what we do at Family Services should not be viewed as separate from this congregation. If it is about the kingdom, then it is about the people of God. It's not simply a "charity," it is part of the kingdom – it is part of the church. And it is done because Christ reigns in our hearts, and we are trying to have him reign in our lives and in the world around us, as much as we can. This is the way of life to which Christ has called us: patterning our lives after him, which means showing compassion and concern for those in need.

How should we respond to this passage of Scripture? By living in his reign. By living as citizens of the King who shows his power by caring for the needy. Not because it makes us feel good; but because this is the kingdom of God – a place where the afflicted are cared for.

In spite of all the great things that we enjoy in our world today, in spite of the many blessings and comforts which are available to us, there are still afflicted people all around us. *We are still waiting for the kingdom that this Psalm is describing* – but we know it is coming. One day God will bring all these promises to pass once and for all. We are living in light of that future when we meet the needs of people in our community.