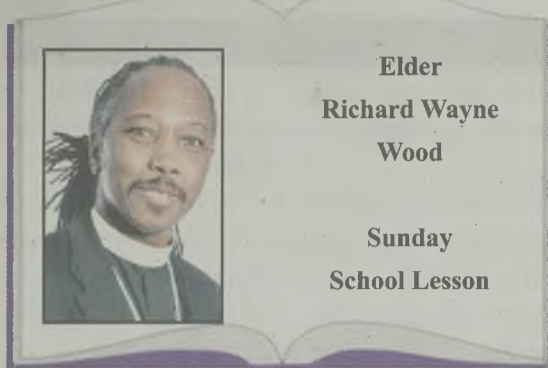


RELIGION



Elder
Richard Wayne
Wood

Sunday
School Lesson

A Prayer For Justice

Scriptures: Habakkuk 1:1-4, 12-14

By the end of this lesson, we will:

*Explain the justice of God in contrast to human justice;

*Aspire to the establishment of justice and fairness for all;

*Celebrate God as the source and model of justice.

Background: Habakkuk means one who embraces. He was a prophet of God and the book is mainly Habakkuk's pronouncement of the Lord's intention to punish Judah by captivity. Most significantly, the book is about living under injustice.

Lesson: The lesson opens stating that the content to come is essentially Habakkuk addressing the Lord with a series of rhetorical questions. As Habakkuk prayed to the Lord about wickedness in the land, he became burdened and wondered why God just seemed not to hear. Habakkuk seems to say, I point these things out to no avail – "And You not save" (verse 2); "strife continues and contention goes on" (verse 3). Habakkuk points directly at the problem: "Therefore judgement emerges deformed" (verse 4). The law was being ignored or twisted, and no one seemed phased by it.

In verses 12 – 13, Habakkuk focuses on the character of God. He questions God and we might say he debates with God, but he does not abandon God. Habakkuk questions why God allows a sinful nation (Babylon) to devour a nation that was supposedly righteous (Judah). Why? The Babylonians were wicked sinners, but they were also idolaters who did not know the true and living God. Judah, on the other hand, claimed to know the Lord, and yet they were sinning against the very law they claimed to believe. "[why do you] remain silent when the wicked swallow those more righteous than they?" This sort of addresses that question. God was not indifferent to the sins of Judah. He had chastened His people through war, natural calamities, the preaching of the prophets, and they would not listen. Even knowing their degree of sin, Habakkuk expected that God would use a revival of sorts, but God planned exile instead. Habakkuk's response in his mind: God has essentially made Judah fish in a pond. "You have made mankind like the fish of the sea ..." (verse 14). They were now helpless people at the mercy of the Chaldeans, a ruthless nation of people who didn't really value life. (The Jewish Study Bible, The MacArthur Study Bible, and the UMI Annual Commentary 2019 -2020).

For Your Consideration: How is God's justice sometimes different than our sense of justice? Does God's use of the Chaldeans damage His righteous character?

Application: Believing that God is on the side of justice and righteousness, many Christians wonder about national and even international events that may affect their personal walk with God and ask, "Why doesn't God do something about the situation right now?" But wrestling with challenges is often a way for our "faith muscles" to grow (Wiersbe Study Bible). We can always ask God for His response in prayer. When we face questions honestly and talk them through with the Lord, we grow in grace and knowledge. Our prayer should also include advocacy for justice in our community and the world. "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2Chronicles 7:14)



Is capital punishment murder?

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

I know that all sin is equal in God's eyes, but for me, murder is the ultimate sin, especially since man was created in the image of God. I understand in the case of self-defense or protecting loved ones, but what about the courts ruling a person should be put to death?

I know that people can be guilty of some pretty heinous things and sometimes death seems to be the only recourse. I don't see things that way. For me, to have a court system be the judge, jury and executioner, is putting too much power into one institution.

I am sorry, but the only person I feel is qualified to say whether a person should live or die is God. With all of the death row convictions that I have seen over the years, that point alone says that capital punishment should not be allowed. With all of the sins we all commit on a daily basis, who are we to say that someone else does not need to live?

I have had several discussions with individuals about the merits of capital punishment. I can understand both the arguments for and against it. The person I was recently discussing

the topic with, brought up scenarios and examples that if a person committed that sort of crime, they deserved the death penalty. Extreme crimes against children, elderly or women are looked upon more harshly in the eyes of many and I can understand that, but that still does not warrant taking another person's life by execution.

When I sit back and think about how the whole process works, I think about the liability of each person involved with sentencing someone to death. What responsibility does the judge, the jury and the prison personnel all bear? Is the judge more guilty because he/she was the one who allowed the death sentence to come into play? Is the jury more responsible because those 12 individuals chose that outcome for the defendant? What about the person who actually has to push the button or flip the switch to administer the execution, whether it's gas, lethal injection or electric chair?

If I were any of those people involved in that scenario, I am not sure I could chose to send a person to their death. There would be so much guilt on my heart, I am not sure I would be able to live with myself, knowing I

had a hand in taking someone's life.

When I think about crimes human beings commit against one another, restitution can be made in most occasions, while others cannot. Taking someone's life would be one of those crimes, because obviously you can't take that back.

The bigger question I have is, what does God think about our system of capital punishment? Once again, I am no biblical scholar, but I can't imagine He is pleased with one of His children being taken from this earth by the decision of man.

I remember my grandmother used to quote Romans 12:19 to me: *Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay saith the Lord,* when I used to tell her someone wronged me. I took that to mean that I need not worry about getting someone back for doing something wrong to me, because God had it handled for me.

I just don't think we as human beings should have the final say in whether someone lives or dies. That should be a judgement left up to my Lord and Savior.

Longtime church member celebrates 80th birthday

BY TIMOTHY RAMSEY
THE CHRONICLE

To have the opportunity to celebrate your 80th birthday is a monumental achievement. To have that same birthday celebrated in grand fashion by your church congregation says even more.

Jannie Little, a member of Galilee Missionary Baptist Church for over 50 years, celebrated her 80th birthday last Saturday at the church with scores of members in attendance. Little was due for a celebration of her own after years of doing so much for others.

"There are all these great memories and I always enjoyed working in the church," said Little. "I joined the usher board under Rev. Hay and worked through until under pastor Scovins. I just like working in the church, those are my great memories."

Every birthday for Little holds a special place for her. She lost her mother at the age of 9, when her mother was only 26 years old, so she always wondered if she would make

it to that age. Once she passed the age of 26, she looked at every birthday as a special blessing.

"Growing up, I didn't think I was going to be 25, and when I hit 80, to God be the glory, I was so happy," she said. "It's just amazing, for me I just want God to get the glory out of my life today."

The love-filled event included singing, dancing, music and, of course, food. Planning for the day began back in the summer of 2019. Wilma Davis, one of the event organizers, was elated to assist in the planning of the celebration.

"She (Little) has a story to tell and to live through everything she has lived through, and to still be here after 80 years, and the things she does for everybody, she will go beyond to help anyone," said Davis. "She works hard for so many other people, so she is here to celebrate 80 and she has been a pillar in her family, church and community."

"It's exciting to see that everyone feels the same way about her. For every-



Photo by Timothy Ramsey
Ms. Jannie Little celebrated her 80th birthday last Saturday at Galilee Missionary Baptist Church.

one to come out and celebrate her and to just show her some love, because she never asks for anything in return, makes my heart happy."

Rev. Nathan Scovins, Galilee senior pastor, said he was thankful to have the opportunity to celebrate a milestone birthday for one of his most dedicated members.

"It's exciting to be a part of this and to see Jannie smile," said Scovins. "She is a hard worker in our ministry, she volun-

teers and serves and has done that since I have been pastor here.

"When they were talking about it, of course I signed off and said let's go forward, because she is worthy of being honored today."

Little has lost all of her family and does not have any children, so she looks at Galilee as her family and dedicates most of her time there. Little says that her goal is to impart wisdom from her life into the younger generation.

RELIGION CALENDAR

March 5 - April 9 Lenten Revival Services

Mount Zion Baptist Church, 950 File Street, will hold Lenten Revival Services at 7 p.m. on Thursday evenings from March 5 thru April 9. The theme is "The Worthy Lamb." Good Friday Service at noon on April 10 will feature "The Seven Last Words of Jesus."

Dr. Serenus T. Chum Sr. is the host pastor. Guest ministers are listed as follows:

*Thursday, March 5, Reverend James Clyburn, Red Bank Baptist Church

*Thursday, March 12, Dr. C. Anthony Jones Jr., United Cornerstone Baptist Church

*Thursday, March 19, Dr. Verenander Hughes, Genesis Baptist Church, Greensboro

*Thursday, March 26, Dr. Dennis Leach, Morning Star Baptist Church

*Thursday, April 2, Reverend Clarence Cox, Hanes CME Church

*Thursday, April 9, Dr. Paul Lowe, Shiloh Baptist Church

March 8 Worship services

The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Winston-Salem, 4055 Robinhood Road, will have worship services at 9 and 11 a.m. Sunday. Riely (cq) Woosley will lead a discussion of "This I Believe" at the early service and preside at the later service featuring a panel of other members addressing that topic. At the Forum, 9:15 a.m., Keith Irwin will speak on "Artificial Intelligence: What We Shouldn't Fear and What We Should." For more info, see UUFWS.org.

March 8 Memorial Scholarship Service

Emmanuel Baptist Church will celebrate its annual S. W. Mack, Sr. Memorial Scholarship Service at 10 a.m., March 8. The theme for the service is "The Path Moral Leadership: Faith, Courage, Integrity and Commitment." The featured speaker for the worship service will be the Rev. Larry J. Brown, Jr. Emmanuel Baptist Church is located at 1075 Shalimar Drive. For additional information or to make contributions, contact Dr. Elva Jones at 764-2550.

March 8 Pastoral anniversary

New Jerusalem Missionary Baptist Church will celebrate the 5th anniversary of their pastor, Rev. Ronald Eugene Spears on Sunday, March 8 at 3 p.m. Guests for the event will be Rev. Larry Whitley and the members of Mt. Moriah Missionary Baptist Church of Matthews N.C. New Jerusalem is located at 1212 Dunleith Avenue. The public is cordially invited to attend.

March 14-15 Women's Day

The Women of Excellence Ministry of Emmanuel kicks off its annual Woman's Day celebration on Saturday, March 14, at 9:30 a.m. under the theme "I'm More Than Purses and Pumps." Featuring Vendor shopping, youth and women sessions on "Self-Care: Mind, Body, and Soul," a bonding and creativity exercise in hat designing, a brunch buffet and dessert bar, musical and dance selections, and a causal fashion show. Registration fee of \$10 required for attendees. Vendors fee is \$10 and some applications are still available. For more information, call the church office at 336-788-7023. The church is located at 1075 Shalimar Dr.

March 15, 17-20 Men's Revival

Everyone is invited to the annual Men's Revival at Life Changing Transformation Church Ministries. The guest speakers for this event are:

*March 15 at 11 a.m. - Bishop Wade Bynum of Life Changing Transformation Church Ministries

*March 15 at 4 p.m. - Dr. Michael Wood of New Bern, N.C.

*March 17 – 18 at 7 p.m. - Dr. Willie G. Sanderfield, Life of Christ Ministries, Highland Park, Michigan

*March 19 – 20 at 7 p.m. - Bishop Steven Copeland of Tuskegee, Alabama

The church is located at 2001 N. E. 25th Street (corner of Ansonia and 25th on the hill).

March 20 Concert

St. Andrews United Methodist Church will sponsor a mini concert on Friday, March 20, featuring the Men of Faith of Charlotte, Male Chorus of Saints Home United Methodist Church, Joyful Noise and others. The concert will begin at 7 p.m. and is free to the public. The church is located at 1840 Butler Street. Rev. Dale P. Sneed is the pastor.

March 21 Teens of Purpose

The First Wauhtown Baptist Church (FWBC) Teens of Purpose college/career preparatory ministry will host Forsyth County Sheriff Bobby Kimbrough, Jr. at 11 a.m. Saturday, March 21. Sheriff Kimbrough will discuss The Power of a Good Name: How important it is to be a person of integrity. TEENS AND PARENTS are invited and encouraged to attend. FWBC is located at 838 Moravia Street. Dr. Dennis W. Bishop is senior pastor.